

A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS NEEDED IN THE  
HEALING PROCESS FOR VICTIMS  
OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS NEED IN THE HEALING PROCESS FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE**

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My ministry context was Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ, Detroit, Michigan. The project was conducted to determine whether a well-defined outreach ministry to support victims of Family Violence is needed. If members attended bible studies, lessons on forgiveness and listened to sermon series on forgiveness, then they would better understand the impact forgiveness can have in the healing process of victims of Family Violence. Results were measured through qualitative and quantitative analysis using pre- and post-surveys, pre and post short answers, and a preaching response survey. These results revealed a need to offer this type of outreach ministry.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I offer eternal gratitude to my wife Linda Johnson of over four decades. I have truly been blessed by her enduring patience during my restless hours and struggling days.

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I am forever indebted to my professional associates, Rev. Dr. Johnnie Skinner, Rev. Dr. Dumas A. Harshaw, Jr., and Dr. Nanthalia McJamerson for their time, support, encouragement, and input during this endeavor.

To God be the glory for all the things he has done. Without him, this would have been an insurmountable task. I have moved through this journey with the guiding of the Holy Spirit and dent determination. God has revealed to me clearly that all things are possible if you only believe.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved wife Linda C. Johnson of over four decades and our children, LaJoya Brennee, Layna Latrese, and Lee, Jr. To my mother Olivia Preston and my grandmother Alma Lagarde both deceased, the women who nurtured and led me to God in Christ. My former pastors the late Rev. Dr. H. B. Charles, Sr., the late Rev. Dr. Elliott J. Mason, Sr. the late Rev. Dr. Samuel D. Proctor, the late Rev. Dr. Gardner C. Taylor, Rev. Dr. William S. Epps, Rev. Dr. Kevin Turman, and Rev. Dr. James C. Perkins for their models of Pastoral Leadership and Prophetic Preaching. To Rev. Dr. Henry H. Mitchell who encouraged my decision to pursue my early academic journey. To Richard Ingram, Sr. my deceased godfather whose love nurtured me during my turbulent years. To my spiritual friends, Deacon Thomas J. Fentress, the late Deacon Charlie Primas, Jr., Deacon Charles White, and Joseph K. Alston. And to my many prayer warriors; without their prayers, my spiritual life would have been misguided.



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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| MCUCC | Mayflower Congregational United Church of Church |
| NRSV  | New Revised Standard Version                     |
| FV    | Family Violence                                  |
| TBFV  | Theoretical Basis For Family Violence            |
| NIV   | New International Version                        |

Without Forgiveness There Really Is No Future

—Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This doctoral thesis and final project have been developed to address the appalling violence that has become a self-destructive force within too many African American communities. It is a present-day social crisis in African American communities across the landscape of this nation. There is a cycle of violence that is leaving too many victims bruised, battered, and broken-hearted. Much of this violence is directly connected to Family Violence and self-destructive behavior in the African American community. Therefore, the theme for the project is “A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process for Victims of Family Violence.”

The African American church must recognize the vital role it can play in helping those victims during this prevailing crisis. Victims of violence need a place of sanctuary to aid in their healing process. The African American church has been that beacon of hope in the community through the years for African Americans. More importantly, it has been that social institution determined to liberate its people from multifaceted levels of oppression. Therefore, with its intervening efforts, African Americans can survive this present-day cycle of violence with the help of the church.

The primary objective of this thesis is to help reduce the cycle of violence in the city of Detroit and the Bagley community. The specific hypothesis of the project is, “If participants receive training about and practice the principles of forgiveness, then they will possess information and methodologies to minimize and/or eliminate the chances of

violence occurring between family members.” I believe that Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ (MCUCC) can play a key role. Additionally, members of MCUCC will be able to provide the crisis intervention needed in the healing process for victims of Family Violence. Further, using the foundations established in this work the church can support victims and help impact the cycle of violence. Moreover, through its teaching, preaching and practice, the Christian principle of forgiveness will prove invaluable.

In chapter one, the Ministry Focus will explore data that revealed there is an urgent need for crisis intervention. Most importantly, it depicts a cycle of violence that has had a devastating impact on families in the city of Detroit neighborhoods. These environmental conditions have led to a social crisis requiring intervention to help rescue families impacted by this cycle of violence. Families have become vulnerable to drugs, a self-destructive culture, and an increase in Family Violence.

Also, there are high rates of joblessness of African American men, high levels of divorce causing many African American women to bear the responsibility of heading households, the spiraling impact of teenage pregnancies, and the heart-breaking impact of high school dropouts. Additionally, the lack of quality educational opportunities, drug abuse, and this cycle of violence are evidence of a crisis.

Therefore, these contributing factors that have created this social crisis of Family Violence and a culture of violence in the African American community must be addressed. This dissertation is an attempt to involve the African American church by targeting this social crisis of Family Violence through an outreach ministry model.

In chapter two, the biblical foundations will establish a biblical rationale for this dissertation exploring the Christian principle of forgiveness. An exegetical analysis of Luke 23:34 was done to support the theme of this dissertation, “A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process for Victims of Family Violence.” Its objective is to provide a biblical option for victims of Family Violence during the healing process for those who have experienced child abuse, maltreatment, battery, and assault. Further, the biblical foundations offer a clear understanding of the meaning of the Christian principle of forgiveness.

Too many Christians and non-Christians misunderstand the concept of forgiveness. This lack of understanding causes many to suffer from resentment, anger, bitterness, and revengeful attitudes, thus leading to aggressive violent behavior. Research shows that resentment and anger are two of the most common time-bomb emotions found that impact victims of Family Violence. Nonetheless, I firmly believe that practicing the Christian principle of forgiveness will produce healing results from the pain, suffering, and agony of Family Violence.

The bottom line here is that we must forgive each other; it is our human obligation as Christians to embrace forgiveness. Moreover, Jesus emphasizes our human obligation to love one another, and through God’s power and the spirit of Christ within us, we can forgive. Further, the heart is involved. Forgiveness is like a stent placed in the human heart to open arteries that the blood can flow more freely. The emotional arteries of victims of Family Violence are closed from the trauma of violence.

Forgiveness is the stent needed to open our hearts to allow the love of Christ to flow freely. The possibility of healing from this trauma of violence is greater when we

accept Christ as a model for forgiveness. Additionally, if our hearts are opened we can experience the benefits of forgiveness that allow the fruits of the spirit to flow (love, joy, and peace). Most importantly, our relationship with God becomes deeper and we can receive the blessings he promised through His Word. Further, renewing our relationship with God by letting go of the crippling emotions of anger, resentment and revenge will enhance our spiritual life and mental health. Most importantly we must not allow anything to prevent our hearts from experiencing the joy of our salvation.

In addition, the biblical foundations are devoted to the Christian principle of forgiveness. This principle is vital for those who are victims of Family Violence. Using the biblical principle of forgiveness taught in God's Word can help and support victims of Family Violence through their healing process.

In chapter three the historical foundations will focus on a brief historical overview of the African and African American Church Independence Movements. In this overview, the African American church provides a model for engagement in social issues during their liberation struggles. Further, through this historical foundation, it is made clear why the African and African American churches sought independence. Thus, through this overview MCUCC can have a clear view of its mission as it seeks to become more involved in this outreach ministry model.

Chapter four will deal with theological foundations using three theological perspectives. The Ecclesiological perspective will be used to highlight the church's mission and vital role. The theology of forgiveness and the theology of the Cross will offer theological perspectives on the principle of forgiveness. The theology of the Cross offers theological perspectives on the meaning of the Cross event.

Moreover, with a clearer understanding of the Cross, victims will discover Jesus as the Suffering Servant, to envision him as a Christian model, as he sought forgiveness for his perpetrators.

Further, through the practice of forgiveness, a stronger relationship with God is made possible. Additionally, forgiveness can open the heart of victims and provide an opportunity to bear fruits of the spirit, love, joy, and peace. Consequently, offering a better life free of resentment, anger, and revenge leads to both spiritual and mental well-being through the healing process.

The theology of the Cross is presented to offer a clearer understanding of the paradoxical event that took place on Calvary. More important, to point out that turning to the Cross and take a concentrated view of Jesus' suffering and dying for the sins of this world. Thus, Jesus's forgiving attitude can serve as a model of forgiveness for victims of Family Violence.

In chapter five, the interdisciplinary foundations explore the need for psychology and theology to work in collaboration to address Family Violence. The independent and dialogue scientific models are used in contrast to the theological perspectives to determine their efficacy.

Further, this collaborative effort will become beneficial for supporting victims of Family Violence during the healing process. The independent model reveals that the psychological perspectives presented can be used in collaboration with theology. However, the dialogue model requires a continued effort between psychology and theology.



The theology of forgiveness points to God's Word with a focus on faith and a deeper conviction regarding the promises of God. The field of psychology focus is on the theoretical basis of Family Violence. Each of these approaches is crucial for the benefit of the wounded. In addition, the theology of forgiveness places emphasis on the need to accept God's answer for the healing of victims of Family Violence. It provides a renewing, refreshing, and rekindling of God's love as a fundamental necessity for spiritual strength to combat the forces of violent encounters.

Finally, in chapter six, the project analysis for this thesis presents a collection of data that provides useful information that informs the decision for an outreach model of ministry for the church. Further, it supports the hypothesis and will benefit MCUCC's decision for establishing an outreach ministry supporting victims of Family Violence.

This analysis uses the multi-research methodology approach involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches: a five-point Likert Scale survey, a questionnaire, a short-answer survey, and a preaching response survey. These approaches were vital in determining the feasibility of developing an outreach ministry for victims of Family Violence at Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

The ministry focus of this project is to provide an outreach ministry model that targets victims of Family Violence. First, a review of my contextual analysis to provide information and findings that influenced the topic of this Doctor of Ministry Project. Also, it presents a formulated hypothesis for this project. Second, provide elements from my Spiritual Autobiography that influenced the theme of this project and the hypothesis for this project. Third, present an overview of the topic of this project.

A description of my ministerial skills and interests are offered to validate my experiences that will impact this project. Further, a description of the general nature and content of the project will be provided.

In addition, a statement of the desired learning experience from this project will be offered. In conclusion, a general statement on Family Violence will be provided and an overview of the context for this project. An outline of the plan for the implementation of this Doctor of Ministry Project will be provided.

#### *Contextual Review*

This project is an outreach ministry model developed to address Family Violence. Its context is Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ (MCUCC) 7301 Curtis St., Detroit Michigan. MCUCC is a church engaged in a momentous undertaking.

To preach Christ's gospel of good will and reconciliation, to change lives for Christ, to quicken civic righteousness, to promote peace and justice in all the earth is the task of the Church. Mayflower Congregational Church of Christ was started in 1930 in Northwest Detroit, Michigan. Further, the community was Jewish with a growing Caucasian middle-class building homes in the area. Mayflower was one of only two Protestant churches in this community called Bagley. From the 1930s to the 1940s, they built a New England meeting house in Detroit, Michigan with an investment of \$1,700,000.

In addition, within a few years, the church grew to a membership of over 1300 members by the 1950s. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the first African American members joined. In a cycle typical of urban America as more African American families moved into the community, the Jewish families and White protestant families moved to the suburbs.

However, as the church transitioned from a Caucasian majority to African American congregation during the late 1960s, some members wanted to sell the building and relocate the church to the suburbs. Most members voted to allow the church to try and become a truly integrated congregation. This caused legal action and the loss of members who wanted to relocate.

Nonetheless, through a compromise those members who wanted to relocate to take the endowment and leave to build a church in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan agreed upon. The remaining members and their pastor decided to call an African American Pastor, who would be co-pastor with the white pastor. This experiment of two servants in a rapidly transitioning congregation did not last long with the African American pastor leaving.

By the early 1970s, the congregation and community were African American. The first African American solo pastor was called in 1977.

Mayflower has always been a major hub for youth enrichment in the past and present. The church has ministered to the community with a major food ministry that has served thousands. It is now ministry on the move for Jesus. And remain located in the Bagley community in the city of Detroit.

Detroit is reported as one of the most dangerous cities in the United States. It has a violent crime rate of 2,007.8 incidents per 100,000 people with a total of 261 homicides in 2018. Detroit is the only midsize or large city in the United States with a violent crime rate of over 2,000. With a population of fewer than 700,000 people today, Detroit reported about 13,500 violent crimes in 2018 – a rate higher than cities with double the population.

Moreover, Detroit's scarce economic opportunities have led to an annual unemployment rate of 9.0% and 37.9% of residents living below the poverty line.<sup>1</sup> With assaults, shootings, and homicides on the rise across the country, Detroit continued last year to be among the most violent big cities in America, according to FBI statistics.<sup>2</sup>

The zip code profile data 48221 that MCUCC is located in a racial majority of 91% African American with a population of about 38,727. The population profile indicates that there are 44.40% male and 55.60% female.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-city-rankings/most-dangerous-cities-in-the-us>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2021/09>

The median household income is \$50,138 near the US average of \$56,604. The average adjusted gross income is \$41,680. The unemployment rate is 8.4% which is higher than the current unemployment level of 7.3% in the county of Wayne. In addition, it is higher than the state of Michigan's unemployment of 4.3% and higher than the national unemployment rate of 4.8%.

The public-school racial majority is 99.2% African Americans for this area. The public-school profile for this area reveals school test performance is below average. Further, 70.7% of students receive or are eligible to participate in free or reduced lunch programs.<sup>3</sup>

MCUCC can serve its membership and the Bagley community by addressing this social issue of violence with an outreach ministry targeting Family Violence. The objective of this Doctor of Ministry Project is to use the outreach ministry model to help impact the social issue of violence. The violence in the city of Detroit has risen to epidemic proportions contributing to increased Family Violence: The theme chosen for this project is, A Model of Forgiveness Needed for Healing Process of Victims of Family Violence.

### *Ministry Journey*

It was in the bucolic region of south Louisiana that my spiritual journey began. It was on Clotilda Plantation during my early childhood development. Several of my family members were sharecroppers on this 500-acre plantation. However, my father was

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.zipdatamaps.com/48221>

employed at the South Coast Sugar Refinery about two miles away. There were twenty-two other African American families on the plantation.

My maternal grandmother worked as a domestic worker for the owner of the Big White House. I had a nuclear family of four members, my parents and two siblings, one brother and a sister.

Also, I had an extended family, grandmother, and step-grandfather whose parents were residents. In addition, my godparents and their two children live on the plantation with us. Most importantly, our family bond was strong, and we supported each other; we shared everything.

Often, in the darkness of many nights, I would look intensely at the glowing moon, the beautiful celestial landscape of innumerable stars, and I would experience a deep sense of a power greater than myself. I was too young to understand it clearly. On other occasions, this power appeared while looking at zigzag lightning and hearing boisterous thunder penetrating the atmosphere many times day and night.

Although these events were undefined at the time, the darkness of the night offered great comfort on clear nights. For example, while gazing at the glowing moon and bright brilliance of the shining stars, I experienced amazing tranquility. However, many thunderstorms would come and cause fear and trembling, especially during the daytime. As a result of this phenomenon, a plethora of questions came to my mind.

Therefore, I would many questions about this, and my parents seem to find much joy in answering these questions. They said, "That moon, and those stars are God looking down on you. Further, when you hear that thunder and lightning, God is talking, and you need to be quiet and listen."

What a great answer, I thought, but I had one more question, who is God? The idea of God had been planted. However, this idea would linger long. Nonetheless, that undefined thought of a God would unfold as I began to attend church, New Fountain Baptist Church in Lockport, Louisiana.

Moreover, in church, everyone talked about God. He was the Lord God Almighty. The preacher would preach, "Trust God!" It was through church attendance I learned there is a God, and we needed to trust Him. So, with blind faith at the tender age of eight, I got baptized, and my faith journey began. Consequently, threescore and two years have now gone by, and I am filled with eternal gratitude and heartfelt thanks. Further, attending church with my maternal grandmother and beloved mother as a youth laid a Christian foundation for me. Regretfully, my father would not attend church with the family, he preferred the ballroom crowd.

Nonetheless, my maternal grandmother and beloved mother were instrumental in leading me to God and teaching me to seek divine guidance in all things. They were extraordinary women and their faith in God was exemplary. My grandmother was a Louisiana Creole with only a third-grade education.

However, with great faith in God, she believed that God would provide everything she needed to take care of her family. She had a strong work ethic; not only did she work in the Big White House on the plantation. On other occasions, she would work as a head cook for the Boarding House. The Boarding House was the place where workers would live who were not residents on the plantation. These workers would work only during the harvest season of the sugar cane crop.

Further, my mother had been an eighth-grade dropout and worked as a domestic worker in the Big White House. Moreover, at times she worked in the fields cutting sugar cane. I would feel great joy while observing my mother and grandmother being chauffeured home from work. When they crossed those railroad tracks into the colored quarters, I was glad to see them. These women had a profound impact on my life. Above all, I learned about God from them, how to cook and maintain a clean house. Further, even today, I find great pride in cooking for my household and maintaining a clean home because of them.

Additionally, my parents were teenagers and had married before I was born. My mother was seventeen years of age, and my father was nineteen years of age at my birth. My father was an eighth-grade dropout but a hardworking man. He found work in a nearby sugar refinery loading bags of sugar, and these bags weighed up to 100 pounds each. I remember very well, and my father averaged twelve dollars a week during this time.

Nonetheless, though the wages were very low, the men on the plantation made less. More importantly, my father had a strong work ethic, worked hard, and faithfully committed himself to his job. He was determined to see that his family had the essentials for a decent living.

Often, I would go to my father's workplace and see him working. He could be seen sweating, smiling, talking, and laughing with his co-workers; he made it all look like fun. On many occasions, I would walk to the refinery and take him lunch during the summer months. Of course, during these times, we were no longer living on the plantation.



We had moved closer to my father's workplace living in the colored section of Matthew's Quarters. Those were the good old days, and my father modeled for me a good work ethic.

I learned from him that a working man was a proud man, especially working to take care of his family. My father's work ethic gained the respect of his co-workers; he worked hard and did not let it work him; he was skilled at what he did. For example, to see him load a railroad car with 100-pound sugar bags was a sight to see. One day he taught me his tricks in throwing those bags, then he would tell me, "You are not going to do this kind of work; you are going to school and get an education."

Further, it was my father who taught me how to maintain a home's landscape and how to drive a motor vehicle. Our lawn was always trimmed neatly, and we always had an automobile while I was growing up. My father had great pride in owning a car.

Many African Americans did not own motor vehicles, and they had to hitchhike to work or walk to get where they were going. How well do I remember that 1952 Chevy Bel Air, blue and white automatic with four doors, we rode everywhere? Those were the good old days.

During my early years, ten years of age, trauma, and tragedy visited our family as I recall trauma and tragedy visited our family. Indelible in my memory is the morning when my family lost all its material possessions. It was July 8, 1961, at 2:30 a.m. when I heard my mother scream with trembling in her voice to my father, wake up! The two-room duplex in which we lived was on fire. I would learn later that the next-door neighbor had been drinking alcohol and got drunk and fell asleep. He had left the fire under a skillet on the stove that started the fire.

My father jumps up out of bed, ran out of the back door, grabbed a hose, tried to put the fire out, but the flames were just too ferocious. This fire was caused by his mother's uncle, our neighbor.

Vitally significant is we were all able to escape the fire. As I looked with horrified fear and tear-drenched eyes, I remember asking my father to let me attempt entering the house. I wanted to get the money kept in a small box under the bed, he refused, and suddenly the front porch fell. My father's refusal saved my life. That day we were homeless!

Moreover, later that morning, my extended family came to the rescue! However, we would have to return to the plantation. My grandmother again would step in and save the day. My parents, siblings, a baby brother two years old, my older brother twelve years old, and a sister nine years at the time, would stay with my grandmother. Without any apprehension, I stayed with my godparents, who also lived on the plantation. We lived on the plantation until we could find another home.

Nonetheless, several months later, we would move back to Mathews Quarters, the community we lived in at the time of the fire. Painfully, we moved across the street from the remains of our burned-down house. This tragedy remains forever in my memory. Where is God? Moreover, God would show up. About two years later, my father would purchase land and build a new house. We would live in the town of Raceland, Louisiana, walking distance from my elementary school. We would be the first in our family to own a new house. What an awesome God!

However, six years later, I would attend high school and be bused fifteen miles from home to school.

My high school was the only school for colored children in the parish/county.

Segregation was legal in the region we lived in, even though the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on May 17, 1954, that it was unconstitutional. Nonetheless, I began attending high school in 1964. During my bus rides to high school, we passed two white high schools to get to C.M. Washington High, the colored school. This daily trip to school was thirty-mile roundtrip.

Unfortunately, darker clouds began to form in my life as I travel through the dark past of school-age years. The question would remain, where is God has become a significant theme? My home life was filled with torturous discipline and frequent family violence. My mother was a violently abusive parent, seem to have had a misunderstanding of spare the rod spoils the child. Internally, I would ask frequently, where is God? My grandmother showed up one day while my mother was disciplining me for some violation of her rigid rules one day.

In contrast, my mother was a strict disciplinarian, penalizing discipline for some violation of her rigid rules; my grandmother showed up. There was God! My grandmother was the matriarch of the family; when she spoke, everyone listened. She was also the family's spiritual leader, and everyone had to attend church except my father.

More importantly, the family violence in my home left me with the same question, where is God? I needed his intervention. One day while working in the sugar cane field, I recall observing a passenger jet flying overhead; as I looked up, I asked God to intervene in the affairs of my life. I simply asked him to take me out of that valley of despair. I hoped that God would let His Spirit interpret that groaning on the inside and deliver me.

I have now realized that there are damaging effects to children who experience family violence. For example, I experienced the detrimental effects during high school when the attitude of defiance erupted in my life. At. Fourteen years of age, I could not escape Family Violence. More disturbing, my parents seem to have had great difficulty communicating without physical combat. Because of this continued violence, I ran away from home.

I recall looking out my bedroom window about 2 am. one morning staring at a bright dazzling full moon, again asking God for help. So, out of an anxious desire to escape family violence, I ran away.

However, this idea was futile; I did not get far. The plan failed; I hitch-hiked fifteen miles hoping to get some stranger to take me in, much to no avail.

Nonetheless, I turned to my father's parents, who lived in the town where I was attending high school. It was about 6 am when I knocked on their door; much to their surprise, they opened the door and let me in. I now had to tell them my story. First, they would talk to me as my grandmother prepared breakfast. Then, they told me when breakfast was over to go to school and attend my classes.

So, I went to school and attended classes until the lunch period. It was during the lunch period my father appeared, and I was terrified. Now I had to travel fifteen miles in silence on the way back home. Upon my arrival home, family members began to gather as though a summit was about to occur.

Of course, my maternal grandmother and step-grandfather lived next door to our house were there, my godparents and my father's sister lived down the street. I would be the only child at this summit; I had to explain my actions.

I simply respond by saying, " I was tired of all the confusion and fighting between my parents and did not want to be home any longer, tears running down my face." So, they sent me outside, a discussion among the adults took place, and then they went back to their houses. Moreover, I recall my mother saying, "Don't you ever do that again!", there was no disciplinary action taken against me. God was with me!

Nonetheless, shortly after, perhaps a few months later, my parents would separate. My mother and my siblings would again return to the plantation. I would have to travel now about forty miles to school by bus roundtrip. During this separation period, I found myself becoming defiant, deviant, and rebellious. I would skip classes and leave the campus during lunch periods, exploring the community's entertainment section. However, I always got back to school in time to catch the school bus back to the plantation. My life was changing, and the damaging effects of family violence were harmful, negatively impacting my character development.

Nevertheless, I found emotional relief while participating in extra-curriculum activities at school. I would participate in band, ROTC, Industrial Arts, and play varsity football to help me maintain most of the time. Nonetheless, peer pressure would haunt my best efforts to be a good student, and bullying would creep its ugly head. These two factors would cause defiant acts of violence on campus; fighting became my defense against these two evils.

Moreover, in the eleventh grade, I got tired of school and told my mother I wanted to drop out. However, having been a dropout, she responded with a painful look in her eyes said, "I dropped out, and my children are going to finish school; you are going back!

So, I went back and finished that year and graduated in the last class of C.M. Washington High in 1968 at seventeen years of age. Even though I finished 54th out of 56 in the graduating class, I got my high diploma and made my mother proud. I am forever thankful to God; I made it. Through it all, I have learned to trust God, as the pastor said.

Now that high school was over, what is next? I had only one thing on my mind: to get away from home and the South. It was clear to me that my environment was not conducive for my future. I was fed up with both the external and internal matters surrounding me; racism, abuse, and family violence had provoked me to venture out.

Therefore, I confronted my parents and presented my life-changing proposal. I met with them one on one and simply stated my case. I revealed to them that I wanted to join the United States Marines Corps, of course, this did not sit well with them. Nonetheless, I told them I would rather die with honor fighting for the country than live in an environment that created much disdain and confusion for me. Furthermore, I was tired of going to the back door, being called a nigger, and living with them with all that violence.

Consequently, I won my case and signed up for the military, and left home on August 19, 1968, with the intent of never returning. Moreover, I recall clearly, as I boarded that Greyhound bus for New Orleans, my parents were shedding tears; however, when I got on that bus, I smiled and had great joy.

More importantly, I left the South and headed to San Diego, California, for boot camp. I was seventeen years of age and happy to leave home. Further, I was determined to make them proud parents by wearing a military uniform. So, I went into the U.S. Marine Corps training with head and heart to get the honor. Consequently, the first night

I was promoted to Platoon Guide, an honored position. I would lead a platoon of seventy-nine Marines during training, at the sound of my voice and command, seventy-nine Marines would come to attention. The training was no fun. Nonetheless, I was upfront carrying that banner high for my platoon 1067, with great pride and style.

Further, after eight weeks of training, I was promoted to Private First Class, the highest honor in training, only given to five Marines at graduation from boot camp. I left boot camp and entered infantry training in Camp Pendleton, near Oceanside, California. I was again honored with a leadership role, and I was promoted to Company Guide, leading 120 marines during infantry training.

In addition, I would train until November, graduate, and do more training for administrative service at Camp Delmar. This training would prepare me for my military occupation in Administrative Services.

Nonetheless, all seem to be going well until I returned home for Christmas. I was a proud U.S. Marine, uniformed dressed, and headed home to make my parents proud of my achievements. Regrettably, after one week at home, things changed. All the joy had dissipated because my parents' violence erupted. Unfortunately, I had one of the most terrifying experiences in my life. During an argument between my parents, my father attempted to assault my mother. Intentionally, I intervened in the Marine Corps style and would have killed my father, but my mother's scream got my attention. I then released my Marine Corps chokehold, which would kill an enemy in ten seconds.

Moreover, all went downhill, and I was emotionally scarred and heartbroken; I loved my father. The relationship between my father and I was damaged for many years.

I left home the very next day; I returned to my duty station broken-hearted and with a changed heart. My defiant and rebellious attitude returned. I would engage in many racial conflicts because of my strong hatred for racists. I grouped with like-minded African American Marines, and we became militants on base.

For example, a Caucasian Marine yelled a demeaning remark at me on one occasion, I almost killed him. I was incarcerated in the brig and confined to maximum security with no daylight. However, after serving several months, I was demoted and given orders to Camp Smith, Hawaii. It was a blessing sent from God, I thought.

Another example took place one night in the Non-Commission Officer's club on the base. I was having fun until the Caucasian U.S. Marines declared the South was going to rise. Their uprising caused a riot in the club, and I was charged with assault and locked up again, Pearl Harbor Brig. This confinement created a great fear. Especially when several white U.S. Marine guards ganged me, they took a mattress covering me and began beating me. That started a time of great depression, I was finished. This time of great depression had overwhelmed me, but I went to God in prayer. I told God that my grandmother said to me that if I ever needed Him to call, I prayed.

Moreover, the very next day, I volunteered for Vietnam duty but was refused. Several weeks later, I would get discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps, now only eighteen years old. I was overwhelmed with fear because of not knowing what type of discharge was in my discharge package. Nonetheless, I was flown over the Pacific Ocean back to California for separation from military service.



This would take several weeks after landing at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California. Further, I then traveled by bus to Treasure Island, San Francisco Bay, California staying there for a week. Finally, I traveled to El Toro Marine Air Base, Santa Anna, California. Staying there for a week.

After a week there, I recall very clearly receiving my separation papers and leaving for the Los Angeles International Airport, by bus back to New Orleans. While riding to the airport, I decided to look at my papers, only to discover that God had intervened and answered my prayer. I got an Honorable Discharge, and I cried on the spot. God was with me; joy had filled my soul. I was out and headed back to Louisiana.

These episodes of violence on my journey have caused great interest in Family Violence. I believe the experiences and the damaging effects violence had on my life prove great motivation to support other victims. Most importantly, this doctoral thesis and final project are being pursued with great determination to offer outreach ministry to others. I believe that no matter how difficult the journey may have been, victims can be healed and survive this violence. Therefore, trusting in God and using the principle of forgiveness taught in the Sacred Scriptures can produce healing.

The theme chosen for this project is A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process for Victims of Family Violence. The hypothesis proposes that if the MCUCC develops an outreach ministry targeting Family Violence, the result would be reduced violence in the city of Detroit and the Bagley community. Moreover, Family Violence is a contributor to the cycle of violence in the community. Thus, developing an outreach ministry for victims of Family Violence can reduce this type of violence.

This doctoral thesis and the final project will focus on Family Violence.

Therefore, an outreach ministry model is being formulated to address this social crisis that impacts church members and members of the Bagley community. There is a great need for crisis intervention based on some of the demographic data revealed earlier in this synergy.

More importantly, this is an opportunity for the church to teach its membership the principle of forgiveness. Therefore, through a collaborative effort with MCUCC, a church and community outreach ministry model will be presented.

As a community of faith and hope, the MCUCC can continue to be the light it has been called by Christ to be. I believe the church needs the community, and the community needs the church, so with a collaborative effort, lives can be transformed for the greater good of humanity.

Further, I used learned skills from both secular employment and church for my foundation while doing this work. I believe these experiences have enhanced this doctoral thesis and the final project. My employment as a case manager for the state of Michigan Department of Family Independence Agency and various juvenile justice facilities has been a motivating factor. My work exposure came through the Departments of Juvenile Delinquency, Los Angeles Probation, New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, the Wayne County Youth Home Detroit, State of Michigan certified teacher, and former Dean of Students, Success Academy an alternative school program for dropouts from the Detroit Public Schools. These opportunities offered me a bird's eye view of the damaging effects of Family Violence.

In addition, my professional training for ministry through the Union Theological Seminary Master of Divinity program and serving as pastor of two Baptist churches have been valuable while doing this work. Most importantly, the theme is of great interest to me because I have been healed through practicing the principle of forgiveness taught in the Word of God. The damaging effects of Family Violence are still real for many families today. However, the principle of forgiveness is a vital theme and offers God's Word for healing for victims of Family Violence. Therefore, my focus on scriptural teachings through bible study and prophetic preaching on forgiveness was crucial. In addition, with great faith and a prayerful effort, I believe lives will be changed—all to the glory of God.

It is my view that the African American church must lift its voice and speak loudly against the violence that is now eroding the community and victimizing some of its members. So many victims of Family Violence feel abandoned and left alone. The church as we know it has been a great beacon of hope. Also, a place of refuge for the least, the lost and the broken-hearted must be made available. Certainly, the African American church offers great preaching, inspirational singing, and moral teachings. However, it can do more by providing an outreach ministry for victims of Family Violence; this is a mission of liberation.

Perhaps the shame, guilt, and pain that come through family violence have been hidden in the church. Thus, the pews may be filled with silence from women and children facing daily violence. It is a matter that is ugly and often hidden because of its emotional and psychologically damaging effects upon many. In as much, the church should seek to provide a forum for openness and provide a space for healing opportunities.

Moreover, Family Violence has become one of the social issues of our society that has been on the back burner for too long. There is a cycle of violence that erupts in the lives of many children. Too often, they are labeled as deviant, misbehaving and delinquent, because Family Violence is not adequately addressed. Victims of Family Violence must be equipped and provided a safe place through the church to survive and be healed from the hurt and pain of this vicious serpent of violence.

Therefore, the research offered here provides scholarly insight that has enhanced the efficacy of this thesis and the final project. In addition, both psychological and theological research used made clear the need to support victims of Family Violence.

This doctoral thesis and the final project will serve as a breakthrough plan for healing using the outreach ministry model. Further, through the church's commitment to setting the captives free, I believe healing can occur through its preaching and teaching on forgiveness for victims of Family Violence.

Four context associates assisted in planning and implementing the ministry model at MCUCC. Upon reading my Synergy Paper and being introduced to the project model an action plan was devised. In addition, each associate was provided with an opportunity to offer their commitments and open communication was key. As a result, this allowed for a clear understanding between me, and the context associates regarding the focus and intent of the project.

Also, the project participation was open to all interested members. The basic outline of the project was to select participants based on diverse background experiences and ages. The targeted group was young adults and “seasoned” seniors. Emphasis was placed on any person in these age groups who had suffered from Family Violence.

Further, lessons about Family Violence were taught, discussions of rape, abuse, child maltreatment, intimate partner violence were opened. The overall outreach is for both church members and community victims of Family Violence. The project's desired outcome was met. Participants were unafraid to share openly matters of Family Violence.

Most importantly, the Christian principle of forgiveness can be seen as a better alternative, anger, resentment, revenge, hatred has been exposed damaging the human spirit. Moreover, the benefit of a stronger relationship with God is seen now as most valuable. Further, the desire is to continue breakthrough sessions on the value and benefits of forgiveness to impact the cycle of violence in the city of Detroit and the Bagley community.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The biblical foundation's paper addresses the Christian principle of forgiveness as it is modeled by Jesus Christ from the Cross on Calvary in his prayerful petition to God the Father in Luke 23:34. This verse is found within this pericope.

32 Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.  
33 When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.  
34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing.  
35 And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!"  
36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine  
37 and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"  
38 There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."<sup>1</sup>

Through an exegetical analysis, a hermeneutic will be developed that will offer support to victims of Family Violence. In addition, various methods of exegetical analysis will be explored to help in developing a solid biblical foundation.

To begin, a word study will be presented to get a better understanding of the word to forgive as it is used in Sacred Scripture. Further, the biblical text (Luke 23:34) will be presented in four translations to observe the similarities and differences in each translation.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 23:32-38 (New Revised Standard Version). Unless otherwise noted, all scripture reference in this document is from the NRSV.

In the exegetical analysis, the following methods will be used: the synchronic, diachronic, and existential methods will be used. Each method will aid in the analysis of the text. The synchronic method will use the literary criticism approach to determine the context as well as a view of the character development or viewpoints found in the text. Thus, using this method various literary aspects of the text will be explored. In addition, using this method a text is seen as a finished product, an analysis of the final form of the text, (synchronic=within time) or Close Reading.<sup>2</sup>

Another approach being used in this analysis is source criticism found in the diachronic method. Through this method, the source or sources used to construct the Lukan passion narrative will be revealed. The primary objective of this approach is to analyze the text's origin and its progress (diachronic= across time) with the intent of arriving at the text's final form or original message as possible.<sup>3</sup> Another example is using form criticism; What kind of narrative is Luke's account of the crucifixion? More importantly, the primary objective is to determine the form of the text.

Further, the existential method will be used in this analysis. This approach will require reading the text as though God is speaking, and the reader must respond. Therefore, spiritual reading of the text will focus on discerning what God is saying to the reader of the text. Perhaps the reader of the text may seek to understand what Luke 23:34 is saying directly to the reader as well as asking what Jesus is saying to believers in these

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<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 234.

<sup>3</sup>Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* 237.

first words from the Cross according to the Gospel of Luke chapter twenty-three verse thirty-four.<sup>4</sup>

The Gospel of Luke structurally is two volumes referred to as Luke-Acts revealed through the distinctive literary device of parallelism. For example, Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-5 are the parallels of the baptism and the descent of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

However, in each volume there is parallelism such as Jesus traveling to Jerusalem and Paul traveling to Rome. In addition, the importance of the teaching of the risen Jesus is found in both Luke 24:46-49 and Acts 1:8.<sup>6</sup> Further, a structural overview of the text will be offered to present an outline determining the context of the text in this biblical analysis.

Finally, the paper will offer a Christian perspective of forgiveness as it was modeled by Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary. The presupposition is that by hearing the first words of Christ from the Cross at Calvary, and looking at his experience of violence, cruelty, pain, suffering, and ignominious death, maybe victims of Family Violence will have faith and trust in Him for their healing and deliverance.

Therefore, all effort will be made to present Luke twenty-three verse thirty-four, the first words of Jesus from the Cross. The hope is that these words can serve as a therapeutic model when revisited and deeply reflected upon, perhaps they will serve as a

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<sup>4</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 237.

<sup>5</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 237.

<sup>6</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 237.



reminder of what Christ went through for us, thus offering victims of Family Violence an avenue to healing and deliverance.

### *Word Study*

Herbert Lockyer, in his book, *Everything Jesus Taught*, wrote what Jesus taught about forgiveness. In an introductory paragraph, he offers a meaningful understanding of forgiveness. He suggests that forgiveness has played a vital role in our salvation. Forgiveness consists of two components, God's forgiveness of man, and man's forgiveness of man.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, the word forgiveness is defined according to Lockyer as, to discharge, dismiss, acquit, let loose from, to remit a debt or sin, to pardon.<sup>8</sup> In addition, it also denotes giving up an inward feeling of anger and resentment, the elimination of a feeling of anger, and transformation to a feeling of favor and love (see Acts 13:38-39). Lockyer points out that the terms forgive, forgave, forgiveness is presented as related terms that are found forty times in sacred scripture.<sup>9</sup>

Let's look at forgiveness and examine what it means from a Christian perspective. H.L. Bruce, writes in, *Spiritual Forgiveness Ethics*, "There are seven words in the scripture which denotes the idea of forgiveness. Three Hebrew and four in Greek. In the Hebrew, Old Testament, they are *kapar*, to cover. *Nasa*, to bear, take away guilt, and

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<sup>7</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1976), 198.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 198.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 198.

salah, to pardon. Nasa is used in both human and divine forgiveness. The other two, kapar and salah are only used in divine forgiveness.<sup>10</sup>

Further, W. E. Vine in his book, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, an additional word study of the meaning of forgiveness is given. He points out that forgive, forgave, and forgiveness must be studied as kindred terms and they must be vital that they are understood in the context of their original Greek meaning.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the verb forgive, APHIEMI, to send forth, send away (apo, from, hiemi, to send), denotes, besides its other meanings, to remit or forgive (a) debts, Matt. 6:12; 18:27, 32, these being completely canceled (b) sins, e.g., Matt. 9:2, 5, 6; 12:31-32; Acts 8:22 ("the thought of thine heart") Rom. 4:7; Jas. 5:15; I John 1:9; 2:12.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, Vine suggests the verb APHIEMI denotes the remission of the penalty due to sinful conduct, God is the one who provides deliverance to the sinner, therefore justly, levied. More importantly, it includes the complete removal of the cause of the offense. removal of the cause of the offense; such diminution is based upon the explicit and conciliatory sacrifice of Christ.<sup>13</sup> However, this verb in the Old Testament is associated with atoning sacrifice and forgiveness as indicated for example, in Lev. 4:20, 26. Further, in the New Testament, it refers to trespasses (paraptoma) e.g., Matt. 6:14, 15; sins (hamartia), e.g. Luke 5:20; debts (opheilema), Matt. 6:12; (opheile), 18: 32;

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<sup>10</sup> H. L. Bruce, "Scriptural Forgiveness Ethics," Truth Magazine Vol 19, no. 30 (June 1975), 470-71.

<sup>11</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words* (Westwood, New Jersey: Barbour and Company, Inc., n. d.), 122.

<sup>12</sup> W.E. Vine, 122. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

<sup>13</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

(daneion), 18:27; the thought (dianoia) of the heart, Acts 8:22. In addition, (kalupto), to<sup>14</sup>cover 1 Peter 4:8; Jas. 5:20; and (epikalupto), to cover over, Rom. 4:7, representing the Hebrew words for atonement.<sup>15</sup>

Further, Vine points that there are two distinctive types of forgiveness, human and divine. He suggests that human forgiveness is to be strictly analogous to divine forgiveness, e.g., Matt. 6:12. He goes on to highlight that if certain conditions are fulfilled, there is no limitation to Christ's law of forgiveness, Matt. 18:21, 22. The prerequisites are repentance and confession, Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3.<sup>16</sup>

The act of forgiveness is a verb, the verb CARIZOMI is used, meaning to bestow a favor unconditionally, whether Divine, Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13; 3:13; or human, Luke 7: 42,43 (debt); 2 Cor.2:7, 10, 12:13. The Apostle Paul uses carizomi often; however, it is used more as quasi-judicial act. The verb here does not mean forgive, however, but (apoluo), to let loose from (apo, from luo, to loose), to release, is translated "forgive," "ye shall be forgiven," Luke 6:37 (NRSV, "release," "ye shall be released").<sup>17</sup>

However, Aphesis denotes the noun, meaning a dismissal or release, translated in Mark 3:29, Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14, and Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18 these texts use the word "remission" the remission of sins, "forgiveness". At least seven times remission is followed by "of sins," and once by "of trespasses."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

<sup>16</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

<sup>17</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

<sup>18</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

Moreover, in the NRSV the word *paresis* is used to mean a passing over, a remission, of sins committed under the old Covenant (Rom. 3:25). This was rather a suspension of the just consequence; Acts 17:30, “the times of ignorance God overlooked,” see Ps. 78:38.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, Herbert Lockyer in his definition of the word forgiveness denotes a similar meaning as W. E. Vine. He offers a meaningful understanding of forgiveness. He points out that forgiveness has played a vital role in our salvation. Moreover, there are two types of forgiveness, God’s forgiveness of man, and man’s forgiveness of man.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the word forgiveness defined by him is as follows, to discharge, dismiss, acquit, let loose from, to remit a debt or sin, to pardon.

In addition, it also denotes giving up an inward feeling of anger and resentment, the elimination of a feeling of anger, and transformation to a feeling of favor and love (see Acts 13: 38-39).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the terms forgive, forgave, forgiveness is presented as related terms are found forty times in Sacred Scriptures. Further, forgiveness can be viewed from three basic aspects, a universal necessity, a divine prerogative, and a human obligation. First, viewed from (Rom. 3:10, 23), “for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” “There is none righteous, no, not one”. Therefore, we are all instructed to pray, “Forgive us our debts” or “trespasses.”<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, Lockyer believes we have all broken the laws of God and need his forgiveness that we may be restored to a right relationship with God. Pointing to Jesus he

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<sup>19</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

<sup>20</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 122.

<sup>21</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 156.

<sup>22</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 156.

states that Jesus, who had much to say about forgiveness, never sought it from God simply because, as he confessed, “I do always those things that please [my Father]. As the sinless one, he never infringed any divine commandment and so has no cause to seek God’s forgiveness.”<sup>23</sup> Further, Jesus never harmed anyone during His sojourn on earth, He never had to say sorry. Lockyer injects the thought that divine forgiveness is of great significance for all who have sinned against God. He goes on and validated this thought by pointing to (Ps. 32:1; 103:3), Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, also knowing that his sin has been covered by the precious blood of Jesus. This notion reveals that there is a universal necessity to seek God’s forgiveness.<sup>24</sup>

Another aspect of forgiveness is that it is a divine prerogative, only God forgives sin. Jesus as Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins according to (Matt.9:6). He was God’s representative. In (Mark 2:5) “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee”. Jesus had the right and authority to forgive sins, He was God in the human flesh.<sup>25</sup>

Further, Jesus reveals the divine prerogative of forgiveness when asked the Father to forgive sinners, (Luke 23:34). “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34). Lockyer offers another instructive note when he suggests that: “Jesus, speaking out of a divine consciousness, implied, “They do not know who it is that they are crucifying.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 156.

<sup>24</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 156.

<sup>25</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 156.

<sup>26</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 162.

Moreover, when Jesus made his plea for forgiveness it was vital; he desired that their sin act needs forgiveness. Further, the intercessory prayer may have been His desire for the Father to open their eyes and see the sinful role they were playing.

However ignorant they may have been, the corruption of sin was not exonerated, but Jesus' prayer of forgiveness opened the door for the divine prerogative to take place.<sup>27</sup>

Additionally, Jesus had taught forgiveness in (Luke 17: 3-4), "If he repents forgive him." But, devoid of authentic repentance for sin could not be forgiven, therefore divine prerogative could not that place. Jesus taught that with this condition met there were no restrictions on forgiveness, (Matt.18:21-35), "until seventy times seven", in other words perpetually or as often as needed.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, it must be pointed out here that Jesus also taught there is one sin, God cannot forgive. It is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This sin has been labeled the unpardonable sin, (Mark 3:29.; Matt.12:31.; Luke12:10).<sup>29</sup>

The final aspect of forgiveness that Jesus taught was a human obligation. The primary aspect of this reality is our forgiveness of each other. Further, using scripture Lockyer gives reference to the following passage, (Matt.6:14-15); "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also for give you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." In (Luke 6:37); "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." (Matt. 18:35); "Likewise shall my heavenly Father

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<sup>27</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 162.

<sup>28</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 162.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 162.

do also unto you if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.”<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the bottom line here is that we must forgive each other, it’s our human obligation if we seek the forgiveness God is offering us. Moreover, this teaching of Jesus emphasizes our human obligation that requires us to love one another, and through this love, we can forgive.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, the heart is involved, God requires us to love one another, hence mutual forgiveness opens the door to receive divine forgiveness. Thus, divine forgiveness offers us a relationship with God, as well as a harmonious relationship with each other through human forgiveness. Additionally, Jesus taught that a forgiving spirit is vital when praying. In (Mark 11:25); he said, “When ye stand praying, forgive if ye have ought against any.”<sup>32</sup> Further, Jesus emphasized forgiving when you have been hurt or harmed by another. Even though this is hard teaching not to retaliate Jesus taught (Matt. 18:21: Lk. 6:29; 17:1). The objective of this teaching is to make every attempt to win the perpetrator over to a heart of repentance.<sup>33</sup>

Lockyer states that the word “*ought*” Jesus constantly used as the Greek form of the verb for “owe.” If forgiven by him, we are debtors to others in that we must manifest toward them the same magnanimity. He goes on to say, “We cannot measure the debt of

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<sup>30</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

<sup>31</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

<sup>32</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

<sup>33</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

gratitude we owe him for the forgiveness of our sins and then the debt we must discharge toward those who sin against us.<sup>34</sup>

To get a clearer understanding of the biblical text found in the Gospel According to Luke chapter twenty-three verse thirty-four four translations are reviewed. The intent in reading different texts is for a closer look at the assumptions, values, and language systems of the translators as well as those of the Gospel writer Luke. Also, an observation of the text looks at distinctive similarities and differences presented in each translation.

Therefore, a clearer understanding of the text may be possible. The preferred translations for this exegetical analysis, are based upon Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*, references. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the New English Translation (NET), the Today's International Version (TNIV), and the New Living Translation (NLT).<sup>35</sup>

LUKE 23:34

NRSV- New Revised Standard Version

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." and they cast lots to divide his clothing.

NLT- New Living Translation

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldier gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

NET-New English Translation

But Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."]

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<sup>34</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

<sup>35</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 239.



Then they threw dice to divide his clothes.

TNIV-Today's New International Version

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Hence looking at the biblical text in different translations reveal distinct similarities and differences. "Jesus said" is found in each selected translation, however the conjunction, "But," is only found in the (NLT). The words "Then Jesus said" are only found in (NRSV). "Jesus said" is the keyword that appears in each of the four translations, despite the differences and similarities. "Jesus said" appearing in each translation add to the authenticity of who spoke those words.<sup>36</sup>

Jesus said -TNIV

But Jesus said – NET

Jesus said- NLT

Then Jesus said- NRSV

The (NLT) is the only translation that identifies who is gambling, throwing dice or casting lots dividing up His clothes.

The (NRSV) and the (TNIV) mention casting lots.

Also, (NLT) and (NET) present dice.<sup>37</sup>

Norman Perrin in his book, *The New Testament: An Introduction*, provides a structural overview of the Gospel of Luke (23:34), found in Luke's, The Passion Narrative, verses 22:1-23:49. Perrin writes that Luke's narrative is derived from Mark

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<sup>36</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 239.

<sup>37</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 239.

because of the general framework of Luke's narrative. Luke seems to use special material and an extensive redaction of the Mark.<sup>38</sup>

However, Luke views the passion of Jesus as a legal murder by the Jews. He believes that Jews bear the guilt for the death of Jesus. Luke does not see the cross as an atonement for sin, thus Jesus' death is not the basis for our salvation.

For example, Luke's presentation of the Last Supper the cross of Jesus is interpreted as an act of service, this view in Mark 10:45 a "ransom for many."<sup>39</sup>

Perrin's outline of the passion narrative, 22:1-23:49 presents a clear view of what came before the biblical text Luke 23:34 and after it as well. The outline is presented as follows:

22:1-2 The conspiracy against Jesus (=Mark 14:1-2).

22:3-6 Satan returns to the scene (=Mark 14:10-11). Luke's account of Judas Iscariot's agreement to betray Jesus, with the special note on the return of Satan who was absent from Luke's narrative since the Temptation (4:13).

22:7-13 Preparation for Supper (=Mark 14:12-16).

22:14-38 The Last Supper (= Mark 14:17-25, but with significant variations). Luke begins his account of the Supper with the institution of the Eucharist and follows it with the announcement of the traitor, an inversion of the order in Mark.

This is of no great moment. More important is that Luke 22:15-16 has the reference forward to eating in the Kingdom of God before the words of interpretation, 22:17-19a (/19b-20), whereas Mark has the reverse order.

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<sup>38</sup> Norman Perrin, *The New Testament: An Introduction Proclamation and Parenthesis, Myth and History* Chicago: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974, 210.

<sup>39</sup> Norman Perrin, *The New Testament*, 211.

It is entirely possible that Luke is minimizing the impact of the words of interpretation by deliberately preceding them with the reference to the future of the Kingdom of God.<sup>40</sup>

Luke 22:24-27 is his version of Mark 10:42-45, and it is certainly developed independently of what Mark represented. The two versions of the teaching developed separately in the tradition of the church, and Luke chooses this one rather than what is in Mark because it avoids the ransom saying of a different context.

Further, verses 31-34 and 35-38 are special Lukan traditions, and the latter verses seem out of place in this context.<sup>41</sup>

22:39-53 Jesus in Gethsemane (=Mark 14:26-52). A somewhat abbreviated version of Mark's narrative.

22:54-71 The trial before the Sanhedrin and Peter's denial (=Mark 14:53-72). Luke finishes the account of the denial before beginning the trial, whereas Mark intercalates the trial into the denial story.

23:1-5 Jesus before Pilate (=Mark 15:1-5). Luke develops Mark's account in accordance with his wish to stress the positive attitude of Pilate to Jesus and the guilt of the Jews.

23:6-12 Jesus before Herod. A further demonstration of Luke's emphasis: the innocence of Jesus, the guilt of the Jews, the favor of the authorities toward Jesus.

23:13-25 The sentencing of Jesus (=Mark 15:6-15). Luke adds verses 13-16 to Mark's narrative, reiterating his emphases.

23:26-32 The road to Golgotha. Luke adds verses 27-31, the lamenting of the women of Jerusalem, to Mark 15:21.

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<sup>40</sup> Norman Perrin, *The New Testament*, 211.

<sup>41</sup> Norman Perrin, *The New Testament*, 211.

23:33-43 The crucifixion (=Mark 15:22-32). Lukan's emphases are the prayer for forgiveness (verse 34), and the Penitent Thief (verses 39-43).

23:44-49 The return of the Spirit to the Father (=Mark 15:33-41). Luke rewrites the account of the death of Jesus in accordance with his concept of the spirit in salvation history. The centurion's confession of his status as Son of God, as it is in Mark 15:39.<sup>42</sup>

This outline provides a clear view of the context in which the biblical text Luke 23:34 is found. Therefore, the passion narrative of Luke's gospel presents the crucifixion of Jesus with the prayer for forgiveness, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do."<sup>43</sup>

### *The Synchronic Method*

John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter's Bible One-Volume Commentary* provides a literary analysis of Luke's gospel. He offers a contextual analysis of chapter twenty-three that outlined our biblical text (Luke 23:26-49) as the Crucifixion of God's Messiah. He highlights Luke's depicting a scene unique to him, women mourners are in line on the way to the cross.<sup>44</sup>

Hence, Jesus delivers an oracle that changes their crying for him. Jesus offers a public announcement regarding the coming disaster for Jerusalem.<sup>45</sup> In Luke (23:28),

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<sup>42</sup> Norman Perrin, *The New Testament*, 211.

<sup>43</sup> Norman Perrin, *The New Testament*, 211.

<sup>44</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter's Bible One Volume Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 680.

<sup>45</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter's Bible One*, 680.

Jesus says to the mourners, “Weep for yourselves and for your children,” Jesus knew that soon the destruction of Jerusalem would take place (70 CE).<sup>46</sup>

Further, Carroll adds that Jesus is taken to the place of the “Skull.”<sup>47</sup> This is the place they would crucify Jesus between two criminals. Moreover, Carroll adds, “Jesus dies as he lived: with integrity, saving sinners, forgiving enemies. He prays to his “Father,” asking forgiveness for those who are taking his life (v.34).”

Carroll notes, that there many early manuscripts do not have (v.34), however, many scholars believes that later copyist removed it. The primary reason behind this was in the post-apostolic era there was a strong tendency among Gentile Christians to make the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus.<sup>48</sup>

Further, there appeared to be a strong belief that the destruction of Jerusalem was God’s punishment upon the Jews for the crimes they committed against Jesus. Therefore, the assumption was Christians omitted (v.34.) because they were convinced that God had not forgiven the Jews for what they had done.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, Carroll points out that God’s Messiah, the Son of God, the focus was not saving himself, but trusting in God and saving others instead. He even offers a repentant criminal an immediate place in Paradise, a benefaction exceeding the man’s request to be remembered when Jesus became the king the placard above his head proclaimed him to be.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter’s Bible One*, 682.

<sup>47</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter’s Bible One*, 682.

<sup>48</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter’s Bible One*, 682.

<sup>49</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter’s Bible One*, 682.

<sup>50</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter’s Bible One*, 682.

Thus, Jesus had completed his purpose, saving the lost, modeling grace, and redeeming mankind. Carroll turns to the crucifixion scene in Luke's passion narrative highlighting the drama, the Sun refuses to shine from noon until 3:00 p.m., and the Temple curtain is torn. He believes this Temple event signified judgment.<sup>51</sup>

Further, he writes, "Jesus dies, a prayer on his lips, committing his spirit to his "Father." Reaction to his death is swift; a centurion brands him righteous (23:47; NRSV, "innocent"), another Roman voice attesting Jesus as unjust. And the crowd leaves shaken and remorseful, while Jesus' friends, including the women who accompanied him from Galilee, observe the scene from a distance, ready to play the role of "witness" in Acts (e.g., 1:22; 2:32)."<sup>52</sup>

R. Alan Culpepper, *New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*, agrees with Perrin's conclusion that Luke, the physician, and companion of the Apostle Paul, is the author of both Luke and Acts. He points out that the New Testament has little testimony about Luke.<sup>53</sup> However, Philemon and Colossians are references that offer some information about Luke. In Philemon 24 Luke is recorded as one of Paul's "fellow workers". In Colossians, Luke is named as Paul's companion "the beloved physician" (Col 4:14).<sup>54</sup>

In (2Tim4:11) maybe written by one of Paul's associates, perhaps during Paul's final incarceration reads "Only Luke is with me". Nonetheless, what is most known about Luke is found in the New Testament itself.

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<sup>51</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter's Bible One*, 682.

<sup>52</sup> John T. Carroll, *The New Interpreter's Bible One*, 682.

<sup>53</sup> R. Alan Culpepper *The New Interpreters Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. (Nashville: Abington Press, 1995), 490.

<sup>54</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *The New Interpreters Bible*, 490.

Considering this fact, scholars look to the Gospel of Luke itself and its parallels to the other Gospel writers for further insight.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, when noting comparisons (or lack of them) in Mark or Matthew, Luke stands alone as a separate component with its distinctiveness. Luke informs us he knows of other written accounts in (1:1).<sup>56</sup> Luke also points out that he was not with the eyewitnesses, but with those who came later and learned the “handed on to us by those who from the beginning eyewitnesses and servants of the word Luke 1:2-3.

Using source analysis, scholars view Mark as the earliest of the Gospels and point out in agreement that Luke used a second written source, identified by the letter Q. These writings appeared to be a collection of the teachings of Jesus that pre-dated the writing of the narrative Gospels. It would be instructive here to present the Two-Source hypothesis (Mark and Q) in a rough outline as presented by R. Alan Culpepper.<sup>57</sup>

Luke 1:1 – 2:52      Luke

Luke 3:1-6:19      Mark (and Q for material about John the Baptist and the Temptations)

Luke 6:20-8:3      Q and Luke

Luke 8:4-9:50      Mark

Luke 9:51-18:14      Q and Luke

Luke 18:15-24:11      Mark and Luke

Luke 24:12-24:53      Luke

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<sup>55</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *The New Interpreters Bible*, 490.

<sup>56</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *The New Interpreters Bible*, 490.

<sup>57</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *The New Interpreters Bible*, 490.

Using this outline the biblical text (Luke 23:34) is located between (Luke 18:15-24:11) based on the outline suggested by R. Alan Culpepper.<sup>58</sup>

Kenneth S. Wuest, in his book *Wuest's Word Studies: From the Greek New Testament* points out that, Luke having been trained in the medical field, his status offered him a place of high prominence. Thus, Wuest was a true representative of the Greek creative thinkers of his day. Further, he goes on to write, "Greek doctors of medicine were in attendance upon many of the royal families of other nations."<sup>59</sup> Because Greeks of this high status studied the scientific method, they developed an accuracy in recording history. Wuest argues, "The writings of Luke, both his Gospel and The Acts, demonstrates Luke's training as a historian."<sup>60</sup> Hence, Luke, the Greek Historian is the author of our biblical text.

Moreover, the suppliers of Luke's evidence were based upon both oral and written sources. He gained information from eyewitnesses of the events he recorded. As a trained historian, he would have carefully checked, examined, and verified his facts. Perhaps this is what Luke was expressing when he wrote, "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very." These words, literally mean, "having closely traced."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *The New Interpreters Bible*, 490.

<sup>59</sup> Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, vol. III (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 52.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, 53.

<sup>61</sup> Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, 53.



Moreover, Wuest notes and states that “The verb means “to follow along with a thing in the mind.”<sup>62</sup> The word was used for the investigation of symptoms, this would mean Luke investigate his sources, both oral and written regarding the events of Jesus Christ's life.<sup>63</sup>

Eric Franklin points out that apart from material juxtaposed to Mark, Luke has some 200 verses, primarily of Jesus sayings, that when mirrored or viewed closely are found in Matthew. However, many commentators assign this material to Q, with the acknowledgment that both Evangelists, are using Q. Franklin concluded that Luke's sources “must remain unresolved.”<sup>64</sup> Gunther Bornkamm in his book, *Jesus of Nazareth* offers historical insight when pointing to the Passion Narrative in Luke.

Additionally, He writes that the story of the crucifixion and death is full of allusions, only a few of which strangely enough refer to the great prophetic chapter of the suffering servant of God (Isa. 53).<sup>65</sup> There are many more allusions found in the psalms depicting a “suffering” motif according to Bornkamm, for example, (Ps. 69:21) “They gave me poison for food; and for my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink.”<sup>66</sup>

Further, he adds, (Ps. 22:18) “They divide my garments among them and for raiment they cast lots.”

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<sup>62</sup> John Barton, and John Muddiman, eds. *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 957.

<sup>63</sup> John Barton, and John Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 957.

<sup>64</sup> John Barton, and John Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 957.

<sup>65</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

<sup>66</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

In addition, Ps. 22:7 says, “All who see me mock me and they make mouths at me, they wag their heads.”<sup>67</sup> He points out that Ps. 22:18 is picked up in Luke 23:34, “they cast lots for his garments.” Bornkamm consider these psalms allusions that depict a “suffering” motif.<sup>68</sup>

Moreover, Luke’s picture of Jesus’ death is presented differently. The first words of Jesus uttered when the cross was first set up was a prayer for his enemies: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Lk. 23:34). These words are only presented in the passion narrative by Luke.<sup>69</sup>

### *Existential Method*

The final analysis of Luke 23:34 is the existential method, this approach is an attempt to experience the text as God’s Words. The objective is to discern what God is sayings to the reader of the text today. “Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing.”<sup>70</sup>

There is no doubt that Jesus is petitioning God to forgive His perpetrators of violence. This was Jesus modeling His teaching. (Matt.5:43-44) Jesus had taught, “You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy, But I say

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<sup>67</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

<sup>68</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

<sup>69</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

<sup>70</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Notice the Prayer of Forgiveness was not uttered with violent anger, but true humility.<sup>71</sup>

Likewise, we pray to God with open hearts, sometimes broken, and with a contrite spirit, He will remove the agony, pain, and hurt because we belong to Him. The assurance of deliverance is always possible when praying, our faith determines the outcome. Jesus at that moment reveals His humanity, we can only imagine pain, suffering, cruelty, torture, violence, and hurt.<sup>72</sup>

However, because Jesus did not express anger against His perpetrators, He left us an example of how to respond to persecution. God is offering victims of violence a model of strength and courage. Therefore, if when we seek to do good and suffer for it only to become victims of violence, know God is looking. Looking at Jesus on the Cross, suffering and dying for you, take courage, continue seeking divine forgiveness for your perpetrator. This was His lesson for His followers, He understood the value of forgiveness.

Moreover, following the Jesus model seeking forgiveness for His perpetrators can serve us and bring healing when we have been victims of violence. These words, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing,”<sup>73</sup> still live today, because we all need forgiveness. More importantly, Jesus is our true model and forgiveness is the principle He offers that can be integrated into our healing process.

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<sup>71</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

<sup>72</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156.

<sup>73</sup> Luke 23:34 (NRSV)

Alexander Maclaren highlights Jesus' prayerful intercession as a lesson. In that prayer, we learn, not only His infinite forgivingness for insults and unbelief leveled at Himself but His exaltation as the Intercessor, whom the Father hears always. The dying Christ prayed for His enemies; the glorified Christ lives to make intercession for us.<sup>74</sup>

In like manner, we seek forgiveness for our perpetrators because we know that this act glorifies our Lord turning to Him in prayer for our strength and courage. In addition, if we can understand the words letting go, it would help us to allow forgiveness to release the pain and hurt we carry within our hearts and minds. Further, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and anger and even thoughts of revenge. Also, it means overcoming these feelings, hence a change in outlook rather than a behavior change.

Simply stated, holding on to these emotional time bombs, anger, and resentful feelings can bring consequences that will harm our future growth mentally and spiritually. Therefore, to forgive means to exhaust in our own being the consequences we have suffered so that those consequences will not cause further damage. There is no doubt that Jesus is petitioning God to forgive His perpetrators of violence. This was Jesus modeling His teaching. (Matt.5:43-44) Jesus had taught, “You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy, But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture: St. Luke Chapters XIII to XXIV*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, n. d.), 304.

<sup>75</sup> Matthew 5:43-44 (NRSV).

Further, notice the Prayer of Forgiveness was uttered without violent anger, but true humility. We pray to God with open hearts, sometimes broken, but a contrite spirit during prayer seems to remove the agony, pain, and hurt. Moreover, there is deliverance when praying and trusting God to intervene in matters of our brokenness. Notice Jesus at that most vulnerable moment reveals His humanity.

Victims of violence are not imagining pain, suffering, cruelty, torture, violence, and hurt they are experiencing the pain. Nonetheless, Jesus as our model did not express anger against His perpetrators, He left us an example of how far God would go for all humanity to be saved. Most important, Jesus teaches the believer how to respond to persecution. God is offering victims of violence a model to regain their strength and courage knowing He hears and answers prayer. Thus, trusting in God's faithfulness, we can look out at life with renewed determination to go forward.

Therefore, if when we seek to do good and suffer for it only to become victims of violence, know God is looking. Further, looking at Jesus on the Cross, suffering and dying for us, take courage, continue to have forgiving heart forgiveness even if your perpetrator doesn't deserve it. This was His lesson for His followers, He understood the value of forgiveness.

Glen Pettigrove postulates, "the first thing likely to strike a contemporary western reader who investigates New Testament discussions of forgiveness is how little it appears to have to do with feelings and how much it must have to do with actions and relationships."<sup>76</sup> He goes on to say, that forgiveness is something we do.

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<sup>76</sup> Glen Pettigrove, *Forgiveness and Love* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 174.

Further, he writes, there are two aspects of forgiving. First, forgiving involves foregoing the pursuit of a legitimate complaint that one has against another. This aspect is viewed as the negative aspect of forgiving insofar as the forgiving refrains from acting in a specific way toward the wrongdoer. On the other hand, is the positive aspect of forgiving which is more closely viewed as an imagery gift. Forgiveness is a gift that is offered to one who wronged you, rather than something earned or deserved by them.<sup>77</sup>

Pettigrove sees this as an act of love, therefore the one who forgives loves. Moreover, in the New Testament, love, like forgiveness, is primarily active and only secondarily emotive. It is a devotedness with the aim of what is in the best interest of the other.<sup>78</sup>

Therefore, Christian forgiveness involves a foregoing and a giving where the aim is reconciliation between the wrongdoer and the wronged. Action is the operative word in the New Testament idea of forgiveness, the emotions involved in being wronged and the reconciled are not left out of the account. More importantly, the one who forgives not only lets go of their claim against the wrongdoer; one also let go of their anger.<sup>79</sup>

The main message here perhaps is that God has given us through Jesus as a model from the Cross at Calvary. Not only that but left us words to hear and say that will deliver us during the suffering. Moreover, the principle of forgiveness must be implemented, and we must be willing to trust God during the healing process. His greatest desire is that we all turn to Him in prayer no matter how hard the struggle, or painful the suffering.

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<sup>77</sup> Glen Pettigrove, *Forgiveness and Love*, 174.

<sup>78</sup> Glen Pettigrove, *Forgiveness and Love*, 174.

<sup>79</sup> Glen Pettigrove, *Forgiveness and Love*, 174.

Further, when you are victims of violence, remember God gave us Jesus as our model, follower Jesus, and open ourselves to God the Father. He will give us the strength and courage to overcome. Moreover, as believers, we must forever be reminded that there will always be a continuous conflict with evil. During the crucifixion, Jesus overcame the brutal and vicious attacks of the forces of evil. It was the evil forces of Satan trying to stop Jesus from fulfilling the divine purpose of God.

Most important, we must recognize that evil lost, and compassion and love were victorious. Therefore, following the Jesus model as the crucified one, victims of brutality, brokenness, suffering pain should offer a prayer of forgiveness. Jesus is the model for those who suffer innocently; just as suffering did not destroy Jesus, neither will it destroy those who follow Him.

In addition, this intercession by Jesus from the Cross is instructive in another way when we truly reflect upon this model. First, Jesus is praying for his tormentors, forgiveness begins with God. Secondly, Jesus taught in the Disciples Prayer, “Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven debtors.”<sup>80</sup> The focus here for the believer is on the critical nature of this prayer, Jesus comes back around at the end of it with this warning. “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:14-15).<sup>81</sup>

Thus, unforgiveness can create a wall in our relationship with others as well as separate us from God. More importantly, Jesus is our true model and forgiveness is the

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<sup>80</sup> Matthew 6:12 (NIV)

<sup>81</sup> Matthew 6:14-15 (NRSV)

principle He offers that can be integrated into our healing process. Furthermore, if we can understand the words “letting go,” it would help us, as we allow forgiveness to release the pain and hurt, we carry within our hearts and minds.

Also, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment, anger, and even thoughts of revenge. Holding on to these emotional time bombs, anger, and resentful feelings can bring life-long consequences. We cannot afford to let these emotions harm our future growth mentally and spiritually. Furthermore, because forgiveness comes from God, it makes sense, mainly in difficult cases, to pray with our Lord. “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing,” (Luke 23:34).<sup>82</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, the theme for this doctoral thesis is A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process for Victims of Family Violence. Therefore, Jesus’ prayer of forgiveness serves as a model for victims of Family Violence as part of their healing process. The prayerful objective of this work is to develop an outreach ministry model at MCUCC that will offer support to victims of Family Violence.

More importantly, it will help to provide a safe place for healing and deliverance. Further, to develop this outreach campaign with a broad vision seeking to reach victims of violence within the community at large. The overall intent is to be an instrument God can use to help eradicate Family Violence.

Therefore, lessons will be taught on the Christian principle of forgiveness during three weeks of prayer meetings and bible study.

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<sup>82</sup> Luke 23:34 (NRSV).



They will offer strength and courage for victims through a deeper reflection on the first words of Jesus Christ our Lord on the Cross.

In addition, there will be a three-week sermon series preached on forgiveness. The objective is to affirm and declare that the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit can aid in their healing process. Also, two scheduled Saturday seminars will be developed to reach members of MCUCC and the community that might be experiencing Family Violence.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS**

In the pursuit of their destiny, many African American communities are facing devastating problems. These overwhelming conditions, caused by socio-economic deprivation, heighten psychological trauma. In addition, a crumbling educational system has led to a social crisis and self-destructive tendencies. These troubling realities must not be left to fester into bitterness, cynicism, and hatred, for these are the cancerous elements of self-destruction. Therefore, urgent measures must be taken by both secular and Christian sources to help eradicate violence in African American urban communities. Most of all, there must be renewed hope offered specifically to victims of Family Violence.

Most importantly, there is a challenge being presented at the front door of the African American Church. That challenge is to engage in combat against this social evil that is impacting the urban African American community. The African American church must take the mantle passed down to it from its historic past.

The African American church must maintain its inherited responsibility to respond to the cries of victims of violence and oppression. Further, it must remain at the forefront of leading the fight against the present social crisis. Its prophetic voice must be heard, along with outreach efforts to help those facing Family Violence.

Also, it must be that spiritual force needed to combat the evil of violence that is causing self-destruction in the community. It must fulfill God's plan to set at liberty those who are victims of violence in the African American church and the community at large to maintain its significance.

More importantly, God has provided through the struggling years of African Americans an independent institution for African Americans to call their own. This call requires and mandates a response from the African American church. Further, it must remain a beacon of hope and the guiding light to its members and the community in which they live. The legacy of providing leadership in the African American community must continue.

Latta R. Thomas in his book, *Biblical Faith and the Black*, points out that it is no riddle that Black people inside and outside the institutional Black church who are in any appreciable degree sensitive to the present Black struggle look to the Black church for words of hope and encouragement, for some workable strategies and directions, as well as for financial help.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the primary focus of this paper will be to provide a brief historical overview of the African American Church Independence Movement. The objective is found in the words expressed by Joseph Lowery, "if you don't know where you come from, it's difficult to determine where you are, it's even more difficult to plan where you are going."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Latta R. Thomas, *Biblical Faith and the Black American* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, n.d.), 133.

<sup>2</sup> "Joseph Lowery Quotations at QuoteTab", <https://www.quotetab.com/quotes/by-joseph-lowery>.

The notion is that the African American Church must revisit its past, evaluate its present posture in dealing with the present-day social crisis of Family Violence, as well as what plan of action it is willing to take to help eradicate Family Violence. Moreover, the intent is to take a reflective posture, looking at the African American Church to provide a historical view. In addition, through this historical overview, the reader can measure its progress, as well as make an evaluative assessment to determine whether its mission is being accomplished based upon its historic past.

In addition, some of the key roles the church played in the past helped African Americans survive during slavery. Through this overview, MCUCC will be challenged so it will maintain its mission, to set at liberty the bruised, brutalized, and broken-hearted with emphasis on victims of Family Violence. Further, to challenge MCUCC to provide a place of sanctuary for these victims of violence.

Further, the initial focus will be a historical overview of the African Church Independence Movement in the United States highlighting its origin and reason for separatist views. In addition, an overview of the independence movement of the African American Baptist Independence Movement and the African Methodist Episcopal Church Independence Movement focuses on their origins, as well as the reasons behind the need for independence.

Thus, through this overview, a historical foundation will be established that will impact his project. More important, MCUCC by revisiting the African American Baptist Church's struggles for independence will discover its legacy. Therefore, the hopeful outcome is to develop an outreach ministry that will be aligned with Christ's message to set the oppressed free, victims of Family Violence.

*The African Church Independence Movement*

During the eighteenth century, many African Americans and European Christians were worshipping together in the same congregations. Nonetheless, African slaves did not experience any real freedom in the North or South in churches although Christians were worshipping together in the same congregations. However, it is significant to point out the intent for slaves to worship in churches of the South was a predetermined notion, a consensus that there was nothing wrong with slaves worshipping, so long there was an oversight by a European.<sup>3</sup>

Further, it must be highlighted that during the period between 1750 through 1789 enslaved and free Africans were gradually developing their Christian roots and adapting to a new way of life in America. However, in the early stages of their Christian pilgrimage, they covenanted with white churches to form “biracial congregations.”<sup>4</sup>

In addition, James Washington points out that slaves also worshipped in “clandestine gatherings like the early Christians who met in the catacombs of Rome.”<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the earliest African slave congregations were started with the aid of Europeans due in most part because African slaves could not own land. Important to note, many early churches had European pastors.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 74.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth K. Bailey, “Protestantism and Afro-Americans in the Old South: Another Look,” *Journal of Southern History* 41 (November 1975): 451–72.

<sup>5</sup> James M. Washington, *The Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986.), xxii.

<sup>6</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

Further, Europeans did not believe that this experience was a matter of inequity allowing the slaves to worship with them in the church because there was an ulterior motive. This interracial worship before the Civil War was not intended to suggest any form of equality. Europeans saw this as a way of keeping their eyes on the slaves. Many believed that their presence in worship had a controlling effect on slave worshippers.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, in the South, it was established protocol to separate slaves during the worship services unless some Europeans were present. However, it is vital to emphasize that for more than one hundred and fifty years before the Emancipation Proclamation, masters worshipped with their slaves.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, the motive was to keep an eye on them rather than provide for them a truly religious experience. They were fearful that slaves would experience the true moving of God's power and be so influenced that their, "inflamed passions" might get out of control.<sup>9</sup> Europeans were always afraid of slave uprisings, new converts were enthusiastic in their devotion; therefore, they had to be watched closely. Ironically, the perception of rebellion was always a prospect.

Interestingly, it is baffling that fear would have such an overwhelming impact on those who professed the Christian faith. But the slaves found great inspiration in their newfound faith. Nonetheless, masters felt a need to keep watch over the passion of their slaves, their faith was never to be perceived as anything other than an "instrument of compliance and control," not freedom.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

<sup>8</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

<sup>9</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

<sup>10</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

Further, this abundance of fear eroded the impact of true worship of God, there was always the fear of slave uprisings. It is difficult to imagine worshipping God and being afraid of other human worshippers because they had to be watched closely. Even worst, one slave worshipper recounted “the white folks would come in when the colored people would have a prayer meeting and whip every one of them. Most of them thought that when colored people were praying it was against them.”<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that the movement towards independence was seen in the South before the Civil War. More important, these congregations were different than the meetings in the woods and slave cabins. They were visible in full view of whites, however, European preachers officiated at the services of the earliest African congregations.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, before the Revolutionary War, some of these African congregations had African preachers. However, the fear factor was again present, it produced an intense paranoia so pronounced that Europeans would persecute African preachers because of fear.<sup>13</sup> However, it was not until Europeans felt that the African preacher posed no threat to the community that persecution would subside. Moreover, if the preacher wanted to have the privilege of preaching, he must follow the model of the

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<sup>11</sup> Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin 'On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Greenwood Westport: Conn, 1979), 250.

<sup>12</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

<sup>13</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

European preacher. During the period of the 1780s African slave, preachers were recognized as the most literate individual in the African slave community.<sup>14</sup>

However, the preacher was always aware that he was being watched by Europeans. Most important, the preacher always took every occasion to teach what Africans slaves needed to know about themselves and their situation.<sup>15</sup> Further, what must be pointed out here is that “except for the exception of some slave preachers, the appropriation of the new evangelical faith seldom signaled an important change in the status, needs, or outward burdens of the slave.”<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, these attributes of strong faith and deep convictions to be free, these founders were under an enormous amount of pressure and assumed responsibility. The responsibility of saving souls and rendering compassionate care as well as liberating those in bondage and having to organize and build churches.

C. Eric Lincoln in his book, *The Black Experience in Religion* writes, The pre-eminent religious reasons for the founding of separate black institutions were the failure of all but a remnant of the white Christian establishment aggressively to pursue its mission on behalf of Christ among Blacks. Separate institutions were in part a response to the failure of white churchmen to treat their brothers with equity, respect, care, concern, and love.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

<sup>15</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

<sup>16</sup> James M. Washington, *Frustrated, Fellowship*, xii.

<sup>17</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience in Religion*, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1974), 12.



Lincoln further argues, “the European church was racist, it taught that Africans were inferior to do an act of God. They believed that they were God’s instruments for leadership. Their doctrine presented Africans a false doctrine of self-hatred as well as the encouragement of a subservient role with gratitude and love.”<sup>18</sup>

In addition, Lincoln postulated, “This was a slave-making, slave-keeping, ego-destroying doctrine which distorted the meaning of the black experience and cosigned all who accepted it to the earth distorted the meaning of the black experience and cosigned all who accepted it to the earthly life of ignominy and futility.”<sup>19</sup>

Peter J. Paris in his book, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches*, writes,

From slavery through the period of Reconstruction they resolved to find ways of separating themselves from the religious and moral corruption rampant in the white churches to gain a measure of independence wherein they sort to affirm their own humanity in the light of a nonracist appropriation of the Christian message. It was due to racism and its negative impact there was a need to form separate, racial churches. Further, there was a positive spirit moving them forward begin “a visible and irrevocable movement.”<sup>20</sup>

Paris further argues, why an independent African slave Church? He postulates that

In the white churches not only had blacks perceived a deliberate distortion of the Christian gospel but they feared a loss of their own self-respect should they continue indefinitely in proscribed form of association with whites.<sup>21</sup>

Further he argues that, only in that separate religious space that we call the black church has the race found adequate independence from the larger white hostile world not only to

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<sup>18</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience*, 22.

<sup>19</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 8.

<sup>21</sup> Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching*, 8.

experience temporary relief from the impact of racism but also to initiate, design, and implement methods of adjustment and of resistance to that inimical force.<sup>22</sup>

James H. Cone in his book, *God of the Oppressed*, vigorously argues, why there are independent African American churches. He point out, “There are independent black churches today because black people refuse to accept the white master’s view of the Christian faith.”<sup>23</sup>

Cone’s answer for an independent church, simply stated, segregation and slavery were undoubted, contradictory from the slave's view of Christianity. He further argues, “The black church was born out of protest.”<sup>24</sup> Europeans were not willing to accept the involvement of slaves in Christianity. Freedom and equality are key to understanding the need for the African American church in America.

More important, Gayraud S. Wilmore argues that “the black church came into being out of a need for African survival. But for slaves and their descendants, a religion that could unveil the reality of another world beyond “this vale of tears”, and at the same time interpret what God was doing to redress the wrongs against blacks was an absolute necessity for survival.”<sup>25</sup>

Certainly, Otis Moss’s view of the African church beginnings has expressed this writer’s, embracing sentiment. He argues, “The black church was founded in slavery, through a certain kind of freedom that was invisibly communicated from God to slaves which the slave master could not catch. While we were, in terms of geography, a long

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<sup>22</sup> Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1975), 109.

<sup>24</sup> James Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 109.

<sup>25</sup> Gayraud S Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 75.

way removed from “Jerusalem”, God planted in our souls the seeds of a “new Jerusalem.”<sup>26</sup>

James Washington’s perspective of a more spiritual notion for the need for independence is suggestive. He argues that the slaves believed that spiritual bondage was a greater affliction than material bondage and that freedom from might lead to freedom from the other. They knew their churches were chattel arrangements. But they stubbornly trusted in the promises of the Bible that God is a liberator.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the Christianity Europeans presented had no evidence of God’s love, neither did it embrace human justice and equality.

However, to profess the Christian Faith and show no love for another human being is brazen hypocrisy. The African slaves needed to establish an independent church to overcome false Christian doctrines, disrespect, and racism. Moreover, the independence movement would seem inevitable as God moved in the hearts of its founders.

In addition, it is important to take a historical overview of the results of that African Church Independence Movement. Unequivocally, it revealed that a people whose devotion, commitment and faith in a faithful God can overcome insurmountable challenges. Therefore, there is a need to explore the African American Baptist Church Independence Movement.

Also, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Independence Movement will be viewed as well.

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<sup>26</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1986), 13.

<sup>27</sup> James M. Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 8.

These independent movements will also help provide a historical foundation revealing the struggles of a special people and their determination to overcome oppression. More importantly, their great faith and deep conviction that God was leading them to liberation prove valuable for this project.

### *The African American Baptist Church Independence Movement*

C. Eric Lincoln points out, the first independent black Baptist congregations were organized in the last half of the eighteenth century, at a time when the American colonists and black Methodists alike had respective declarations of independence. The black Baptists were pursuing no overt political revolts but rather were struggling to carve out a religious space during southern plantations that defined their lives as slaves. During the antebellum period, however, fugitive slaves and free Blacks in the North did form abolitionist missionary associations and societies. The leaders of which then organized the first regional black association conventions and were for a long time simultaneously involved in white Baptist organizations.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, James M. Washington argues,

The independent African American Baptist churches found their humble beginnings in the states of Virginia and Georgia. Their belief was “that spiritual bondage was a greater affliction than material bondage, and that freedom from one might lead to freedom from the other. They knew their churches were chattel arrangements. But they stubbornly trusted in the promises of the Bible that God is a liberator.” Slaves were permitted by some masters to attend revival services on the plantation, many slaves accepted this “evangelical faith.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience*, 20.

<sup>29</sup> James M. Washington *Fellowship Frustrated*, 7.

Washington argued that “This evangelical ethos provided a new veneer behind which slaves could retain important fragments of their old faiths. And it provided a new source of psychic energy to help them meet the harsh challenge of the New World.”<sup>30</sup>

Also, instrumental in this effort were Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, both European Separatist Baptists credited for Christianity being brought to the slaves of North and South Carolina as well as Georgia. Through, their evangelistic effort during this period the first African congregation would emerge. For example, the first African congregation recorded was organized in 1758 on a plantation owned by William Byrd by the Bluestone River, near Mecklenburg, Virginia.

George Liele, an African slave was impacted by this evangelical ethos mentioned earlier. He was deeply affected by the zeal and powerful preaching of Matthew Moore in 1772 and was converted to Christianity. He would go on to become the first formally ordained African Baptist minister. Further, he was instrumental in leading two slaves David George and Jesse Galpin into the evangelical preaching ministry on the George Galphin plantation in Silver Bluff, South Carolina. In addition, Liele would encourage David George to serve as pastor of a tiny group of slaves on the plantation.

Moreover, from the encouragement of Liele, Jesse Galphin (also called Jessie Peters) would organize an independent African Baptist Church, Springfield Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia. This independent African Baptist Church was organized around 1787 with former members of the Silver Bluff Church of South Carolina. Liele would leave the country with his British master, Colonel Kirkland. His compassion was a ministry of foreign mission work in Jamaica.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> James M. Washington, *Fellowship Frustrated*, 7.

However, before leaving he baptized Andrew Bryan, who would be ordained later by Abraham Marshall who constituted a group Bryan was leading in Savannah at the time. This new Baptist congregation would become the First African Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia established on January 20, 1788.

This church has been labeled the oldest African Baptist Church with sustained existence.<sup>32</sup>

In the North, the Joy Street African Baptist Church of Boston, which is dated back to 1805, was founded by Thomas Paul.<sup>33</sup> In 1808, First Baptist Church in New York City had restricted segregated seating among parishioners. In protest, to this restriction visiting Ethiopian seamen and African American parishioners, 12 women and 4 men organized a church with the aid of Reverend Thomas Paul of Boston in 1809.<sup>34</sup> Its first pastor was Reverend John Van Vessler.

It now stands as the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church of Harlem, New York under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III. Its legacy of social justice through the leadership of Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Sr, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr and Rev. Dr. Samuel D. Proctor, continues.

In 1840 another independent convention was organized, the American Baptist Missionary Convention with a focus on ministries in Northern and Midwestern states. It was formally organized at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York City.

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<sup>31</sup> James M. Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 9

<sup>32</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles*, 38.

<sup>33</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles*, 38.

<sup>34</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles*, 38.

In 1864 due to the inability of the ABMS to serve, the Western and Southern Missionary Baptist Convention was organized.<sup>35</sup>

Nonetheless, these two conventions merged into one convention, the Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention (CABMC), which would last only thirteen years. Upon his return from the mission field in Africa, W.W. Colley filled with determination to missionary work, felt the need to organize another convention.

In Montgomery, Alabama he met with about one hundred and fifty pastors in 1880 for two days in November and organized the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. Its purpose was committed strictly to foreign mission work. In 1886 it was becoming necessary for Baptists to focus on the great need to serve the recently freed slaves.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, William J. Simmons, president of State University at a meeting on August 25, 1886, in St. Louis, Missouri proposed the organization of the American National Baptist Convention (ANBC) after meeting with some six-hundred clergy. The purpose of this convention was to assist the spiritual and physical welfare of African Americans in America. McCall points out that, “One of the ways of meeting these needs was through education. Many educational institutions developed.”<sup>37</sup>

However, on September 24, 1895, these conventions would meet in Atlanta, Georgia, at Friendship Baptist Church, to consolidate their efforts, thus organizing the National Baptist Convention USA.<sup>38</sup> Further, within two years another convention would

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<sup>35</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles*, 38.

<sup>36</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles*, 38.

<sup>37</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles*, 38.

<sup>38</sup> Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Lifestyles*, 3.

be organized after much conflict among Baptist leaders. Hence, the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention would be established and located in Louisville, Kentucky. Between 1897 and 1961 African American Baptists would organize five different national governing bodies as their African American Baptist denomination affiliates.<sup>39</sup>

A chronological profile of these national governing bodies of African American Baptists formed before and after 1895 consists of the following:

1. Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention (CABMC 1866)
2. Baptist General Association of Western States and Territories (BGAWT 1873)
3. New England Baptist Convention (NEBC 1874)
4. Baptist Foreign Mission Convention (BFMC 1880)
5. American National Baptist Convention (ANBC 1886)
6. National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. (NBC 1895)
7. Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention (LCFMC 1897)
8. United American Free Will Baptist Church (UAFWBC 1901)
9. National Primitive Baptist Convention (NPBC 1906)
10. National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA 1916)
11. National Baptist Evangelical Life and Soul-Saving Assembly of the U.S.A. (NBELSA 1921)
12. Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC 1961).<sup>40</sup>

James M. Washington recognizing the turbulent past of the African

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<sup>39</sup> James M. Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 200.

<sup>40</sup> James M. Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, xvii.



American Baptist struggle in organizational stability writes, with more than fifty thousand congregations and nearly twelve million members, today the black Baptist movement is the largest social and religious movement in Afro-America. But it seems to lack the ability to focus all of that potential power. The largest of these bodies, The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., has yet to prove it has the will and the ability to become a powerful social institution. Yet it remains a vigorous and enhancing religious movement.”<sup>41</sup>

Further, Reverend Dr. Sandy F. Ray who spoke at Yale Divinity School in 1981 just before his death, describes African American Baptists. Rev. Ray describes the life of black Baptists as a “frustrated fellowship” whose unfocused collective power is one of the great tragedies of African American religious history.<sup>42</sup>

Although, it may have seemed true from Reverend Ray’s vantage point. Nevertheless, despite tragic organizational disarray and its frustrating structure the African American Baptist still lives. Further, there are many African American Baptist Churches, standing as forerunners and at the forefront fighting for the liberation of its people. Moreover, African American Baptists still believe that God will make a way somehow and there is a bright side somewhere.

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<sup>41</sup> James M. Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, xvii.

<sup>42</sup> James M. Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, xvii.

*The African Methodist Episcopal Church Independent Movement*

Peter J. Paris writes, an address by Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom given in 1946 a pride of the historic beginning of the African Method Episcopal Church when he expressed these sentiments,

In 1787 when the U.S. Constitution was being framed in Philadelphia, we were five or six blocks away on sixth and Lombard, organizing the African Methodist Episcopal Church. As the first lines of the bill proclaiming independence for the United Colonies from Great Britain were struck off, we too, floated our flag six blocks away for manhood, and independence to the establishment of a church to the glory of God.<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, the first independent denomination to be formed by Africans in the United States was African Methodist. As early as 1787 in Philadelphia, the African American church emerge out of protest. Richard Allen a former slave who purchased himself from his Delaware master in 1777, the same year he was converted.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, he became a member of the Methodist society in Delaware around 1780. He became a licensed preacher in 1783 gained the favor of Bishop Asbury and was given the privilege to preach in New Jersey and Philadelphia. In 1786 Allen became a member of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. He organized a prayer ministry in St. George holding prayer meetings for his people.<sup>45</sup>

However, during a worship service at St. George's Methodist Episcopal, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, William White, and several other Africans were told to sit upstairs in the new gallery that they had helped build. When they mistakenly sat in an area not

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<sup>43</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Raleigh, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 51.

<sup>44</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 51.

<sup>45</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 51.

designated for Africans, they were forcibly removed from their seats, resenting being relegated to a segregated gallery at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church and being humiliated during prayer while in the worship service they left the church.<sup>46</sup>

James H. Cone in his book *Black Theology & Black Power* offers Richard Allen description of the event:

We had not been long upon our knees before I heard considerable scuffling and low talking. I raised my head up and saw one of the trustees, H\_\_\_M\_\_\_, having hold of the Reverend Absalom Jones, pulling him up off his knees, and saying, "You must get up-you must not kneel here." Mr. Jones replied, "Wait until prayer is over. Mr. H\_\_\_M\_\_\_ said, "No, you must get up now, or I will call for aid and force you away." Mr. Jones said, "Wait until prayer is over, and I will trouble you no more." With that, he beckoned to one of the other trustees, Mr. L\_\_\_ S\_\_\_ to come to his assistance He came and went to William White to pull him up. By this time prayer was over, and we all went out of the Church in a body, and they were no more plagued with us in the Church My Dear Lord was with us, and we were filled with fresh vigor to get a house erected to worship God in.<sup>47</sup>

In April 1787 Allen and Absalom Jones organized a mutual aid society for benevolent purposes and "without regard to religious tenets."<sup>48</sup> This Free African Society would serve both religious and secular functions, it held functions in a rented storeroom. The Free African Society for several years, from 1788 to 1791, would meet at the Society of Friends School House.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, seven years later this building would be dedicated as St. Thomas' African Episcopal Church, Absalom Jones would become its pastor. Jones had been

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<sup>46</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 51.

<sup>47</sup> James H Cone, *Black Theology*, 95.

<sup>48</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 51.

<sup>49</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 51.

ordained the first African Protestant Episcopal priest in 1808. In addition, Richard Allen had been offered the role of the pastor but refused. He felt that Methodism would best suit the needs of people of color. Therefore, the Free African Society was at first non-denominational and provided mutual aid to the free African community. Absalom Jones began to lead Episcopal services in the newly erected building. Even though Allen and Jones led different denominations, they continued to work closely together serving the black community in Philadelphia.<sup>50</sup>

However, on July 17, 1794, the African Church would be accepted as a parish. Additionally, St. Thomas African Episcopal would be led by Absalom Jones. Nonetheless, twelve days later, on July 29, 1794, Bishop Francis Asbury would dedicate Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church under the Methodist tradition. The church adopted the slogan: "To Seek for Ourselves." Further, in recognition of his leadership and preaching in 1799, Bishop Francis Asbury ordained Allen a Methodist minister.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, Allen and the AME Church were active in antislavery campaigns, fought racism in the North, and promoted education, starting schools for black children. Finding that other black congregations in the region were also seeking independence from white control, in 1816 Allen organized a new denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the first fully independent black denomination, he was elected its first bishop in 1816.

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<sup>50</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 48-49.

<sup>51</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 48-49.

However, while he and Jones led different denominations, they continued to work closely together and with the black community in Philadelphia. It is important to note, even though Mother Bethel A.M.E. is the most recognized independent African Methodist Episcopal church, many other churches did exist. This chronological list of historic African Methodist Episcopal affiliated churches reveals a legacy of faithful commitment of service to the Kingdom of God.<sup>52</sup>

1. Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) 1816
2. African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) 1820
3. Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) 1870
4. Union American Methodist Church (UAM) 1813
5. African Union First Colored Methodist Protestant Church (AUMP) 1866
6. Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church (RMUE) 1885
7. Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church (RZUA) 1881
8. Independent African Methodist Episcopal Church (IAME) 1907
9. African Union First Colored Methodist Protestant Church (AUMP) 1866<sup>53</sup>

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is the largest of the African American Methodist denomination. However, it is significant to note that it is not the oldest African American Methodist church. Union American Methodist Episcopal Church is the oldest of all African American churches within the Methodist denomination. Its original name was the Union Church of America, it was established by Peter Spencer in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1813.

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<sup>52</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 48-49.

<sup>53</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Mamiya, Lawrence, *The Black Church*, 48.

Nevertheless, the A.M.E. Church teachings and polity follow, The Book of Discipline, formed after the original Methodist Episcopal Church. In addition, their church's motto is "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Man Our Brother."<sup>54</sup>

Most importantly, from its earliest beginning, the AME mission focused on the empowerment and upward mobility of its people. Their first mission was to provide social service relief for its members and the African community. In addition, through the efforts of Bishop Daniel Payne a former schoolmaster, education took a high priority. He encouraged African Methodist Episcopal pastors to organize schools as well as educational training for clergy.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, an address at their General Conference of 1864 reveals Bishop Payne's deep steadfastness for education. He stated:

We assure you, dear brothers, this is no time to encourage ignorance and mental sloth; to enter the ranks of the ministry, for the education and elevation of millions now issuing out of the house of bondage, require men, not only talented but well educated; but thoroughly sanctified unto God.<sup>56</sup>

Important to note is that Bishop Payne before his address, eleven years earlier, led in the founding of the first African American institution of higher learning in the United States, Wilberforce University in 1856.<sup>57</sup>

Further, Bishop Payne's illuminating model has benefited generations of African Americans as well as empowered their lives. In addition, this exemplary leadership serves as evidence of God's power made available for leaders determined to share God's vision

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<sup>54</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 49.

<sup>55</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 49.

<sup>56</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 49.

<sup>57</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 49.

for his people seeking independence. Moreover, from this vision many A.M.E. colleges emerged:

1. Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, Ohio- 1856
2. Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia, -1881
3. Allen University, Columbia, South Carolina, -1870
4. Paul Quinn College, Waco, Texas-1881
5. Shorter Junior College, North Little Rock, Arkansas, -1886
6. Edward Waters College, Jacksonville, Florida-1886

Further, the preponderance of evidence has revealed, a great history of a people determined to embrace their faith depending on God, to make a way somehow.

Therefore, this history has provided great value in learning about this huge legacy left by the African Church. Additionally, it has provided a monumental historical foundational resource on which to build. Thus, this humbling experience has given a great comfort, knowing that with God on your side, nothing is insurmountable.

In conclusion, I believe that it is a vital necessity to have a solid historical foundation while serving the African American church and its community.

Furthermore, gaining insight from the forerunner of the Christian faith and their heroic leadership is invaluable. In addition, to glean valuable strategic methods used to help African Americans survive under inhuman conditions is inexpressible. Most importantly, while reflecting with an intense focus on the struggles and hardships African Christians went through for their independence, it has offered great encouragement for future generations.

In addition, recognizing the depth of the Africans' faith in the God of the Bible reveals the power of the Word of God. Further, these forerunners of the Christian Faith have provided a beacon of hope and a shining model. Moreover, a deeper conviction has come forth, thus all things are possible when our faith is practiced at the highest level.

Therefore, we are encouraged when walking and talking with God until we gained true freedom. God does move in mysterious ways. This journey through the annals of African church history has provided an invaluable and transformative learning experience. It will forever be a challenge and serve as a great historical foundation while doing ministry in the African American Church and its community.

These historical foundations impact the mission of the African American church. First, it depicts the awesomeness of God, when a people of faith, pray, practice, worship, and trust God, we will overcome. Also, the Africans struggle through Slave Era to freedom will prove vital doing outreach ministry helping and supporting victims of Family Violence. Therefore, its effort to help and support victims of Family Violence will seem even more possible. Moreover, because the African bold forerunners of the Christian faith overcame slavery, with God on their side, then all things are possible.

Secondly, these historical foundations offer new challenges for MCUCC as it faces this present age. The challenge is a deeper commitment and a stronger determination to serve God's people towards their liberation. The church must have a willingness to utilize its principles of faith, pray, practice, and worship God as our forerunners of the Christian Faith with bold faith and dent determination.

The newfound hope through this historical overview will serve as a roadmap, showing the way.



Therefore, joining the battle against the social evils that African Americans face today both in the church and the community. Hence, MCUCC must be willing to embrace this legacy as an independent institution established by God. Further, it must do more than the founders of the African independent church leaning and depending on God.

Moreover, it must recognize its divine purpose and mission to serve in this struggle to set at liberty the victims of Family Violence. In addition, it must not abandon its responsibility and this opportunity to follow Christ to do more both in the church and the African American community. Therefore, be determined to do outreach ministry that will serve this present age through this project.

There has been a great inspiration through this exploration, and from Peter J. Paris when he points out,

the multifarious functions of the black church justify the claim that they have been the institutional center of the black community; the basic source of religious and moral values; diligent in protecting the community from the many and varied abuses of racism by comforting the wounded, restoring dignity to the demoralize, hope to the despairing and redirection to those bent on harboring attitudes of bitterness and redirection to those disposed to acts of violence.<sup>58</sup>

As an African American Church, MCUCC must stay on the battlefield and fight the fight of faith, never forgetting its historic past. More importantly, it must not be found guilty of losing its divine lampstand from its center as did the church at Ephesus.

Revelation: 2:4-5, But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen; repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching*, 109.

<sup>59</sup> Rev. 2:4-5 (NRSV)

Therefore, in collaboration with other community agencies, social services, community liaison law enforcement, local school leaders, and political organizations.

MCUCC will host seminars on Family Violence to address its negative impact on African American families. The objective of these seminars for this project is to offer insight that can help eradicate the violence in the Bagley community.

More importantly, MCUCC will develop a viable outreach ministry. This ministry will teach victims how to respond to violence using the Christian principles of forgiveness and teach useful survival skills to help victims through the healing process.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The theological foundations for this dissertation are being offered as a challenge to the African American church to play a larger role in its support of victims facing Family Violence. As one of the most significant institutions in the African American community, the church must seek to develop ways to support and serve victims of Family Violence.

In the preceding chapters, two and three, both biblical and historical foundations are developed to inform this dissertation. The focus in the biblical foundations was to provide a biblical exegesis of the first words of Jesus from the Cross on Calvary. Through that exploration, Jesus' passionate prayer in Luke 23:34 during the violent attacks, pain, and suffering serves in this project as a model for victims of Family Violence.

The main message is that God has given us, through Jesus Christ, a model of forgiveness when we revisit his first words from the Cross at Calvary. Furthermore, he provided words that are vital in times of violent confrontation, also words to repeat when confronted with suffering from the impact of violence.

Moreover, the principle of forgiveness must be practiced, and we must be willing to trust God through the healing process. Jesus revealed to us that we must turn to God in prayer no matter how hard the struggle or painful the suffering. Further, when you are victimized due to violence, Jesus is our model. Moreover, as followers of Jesus, we must

surrender ourselves to God the Father who will intervene and will give us the strength and courage to overcome. Also, as believers we must forever be reminded, we fight against evil in this world that seeks to destroy our relationship with God.

In the historical foundation, an overview of the African Church Independence Movement is presented. The historical foundation's overview was provided that MCUCC can use as a road map. Further, with a determined effort to do outreach ministry for victims of Family Violence offering crisis intervention, it can support and help both the church and its community.

The struggles of the African Church towards its independence left a great legacy and model for the African American church. For example, the great outreach ministry of Richard Allen and Absalom Jones provided immediate relief and support for African slaves. Also, the strategic methods and the monumental Christian Faith practiced by the African Church serve as a shining light of hope, in these present-day struggles.

Moreover, the historical foundations presented offer insight for any African American church doing ministry that addresses social issues. Therefore, the hope is that the African American Church will refocus its mission of service to its members and the local community. Additionally, there must be a rededicating effort to fulfill that legacy, also to champion this social issue problem of Family Violence that impacts both members of MCUCC and the Bagley community.

Therefore, as a twenty-first century church, MCUCC is called upon to take its rightful place as a spiritual anchor, thus helping in stabilizing the community in this deep ocean of violence that's impacting African American families.

In addition, there must be a huge effort made to provide the necessary resources needed for families facing Family Violence and provide a safe sanctuary through the healing process.

These theological foundations will provide vital theological perspectives that MCUCC can use as a solid ground on which to stand. To this end, a definition of theology and the theological approach being used for this theological foundation is being provided. Also, two major theological themes that will enhance this theological foundation are offered. They are ecclesiology and theology of forgiveness that will provide substantial input that can be used in this project. Ecclesiology will be discussed in this chapter to address the mission of the church. The theology of forgiveness will address the Christian principle of forgiveness.

To begin, theology must be defined, Seward Hiltner in his book, *Theological Dynamics* posits, “Theology is defined as the field of study and analysis of God and His attributes and relations to the universe; study of divine things or religious truth; divinity.”<sup>1</sup> Hiltner believes that theology speaks about the faith and the need to examine it, thus, providing a deeper understanding of the Christian Faith.<sup>2</sup>

Hiltner posits that “it attempts to guide behavior about the self, concerning relation to other Christians, and to everything else that exists.”<sup>3</sup> Hiltner's notion of theology provides life guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> Seward Hiltner, *Theological Dynamics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972), 185.

<sup>2</sup> Seward Hiltner, *Theological Dynamics*, 187.

<sup>3</sup> Seward Hiltner, *Theological Dynamics*, 193.

This idea is a major objective of this project, to present theological insight that will help guide behavior based on the Christian principle of forgiveness.

Consequently, looking at the concept of life guidance. The principle of forgiveness as a guide offers a better self. The idea is to present forgiveness as a key principle available for Christians who have experienced Family Violence. The connection must be made in order to help in the healing process for victims of Family Violence through practicing the Christian principle of forgiveness.

Another meaning of theology is postulated by David Tracy. In his essay, *The Foundations of Practical Theology*, a definition is given that is valuable for this foundation. He states, “Theology is the discipline that articulates mutually critical correlations between the meaning and truth of an interpretation of the Christian faith and the meaning and truth of an interpretation of the contemporary situation.”<sup>4</sup> Tracy sees this as the true nature of theology, thus a hands-on approach and a public schematic that provide a praxis reflected in human transformation.<sup>5</sup>

David Tracy presents the idea of theology as “praxis” in human transformation which a clear objective for this project. Moreover, this human transformative nature of theology supports another objective of this project, to help transform human lives. This theological foundation will be based upon a practical theological approach. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher’s understanding of theology will provide the rationale for this theological approach.

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<sup>4</sup> Don S. Browning, *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1983), 43.

<sup>5</sup> Don S. Browning, *Practical Theology*, 62.

In Schleiermacher's 1811 edition of the Brief Outline, he presents three types of theology, philosophical theology as the "root" (Wurzel), historical theology as the "body" (Korper), and practical theology as the "crown" (Krone).<sup>6</sup>

Thus, Schleiermacher's scholarly input regarding Practical Theology as the "crown" will serve as the major theological component for this theological foundation. Moreover, it is necessary to define Practical Theology at this juncture to further develop a clearer understanding and meaning of Practical Theology from other scholarly perspectives.

James W. Fowler's view of Practical Theology is relevant as well. He wrote in, *Practical Theology and the Shaping of Christian Lives*. Practical theology is theological reflection and construction arising out of and giving guidance to a community of faith in the praxis of its mission. Practical theology is a critical and constructive reflection on the praxis of the Christian community's life and works in its various dimensions.<sup>7</sup>

Fowler's definition of Practical Theology is being incorporated because his input is vital for the church. His notion of giving guidance to the community of faith is offered, especially in the execution of its mission. Further, this view supports the idea that the church, the community of faith can benefit from the use of a practical theological approach. Equally, these definitions of Practical Theology will provide the best option in developing this theological foundation. In addition, it offers critical insight that will enhance this project, by offering a practical theological approach that provides guidance that leads to Christian practice.

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<sup>6</sup> Don S. Browning, *Practical Theology*, 149.

<sup>7</sup> Don S. Browning, *Practical Theology*, 149.

### *Ecclesiology*

This theological theme is vital to this theological foundation. It is essential in making clear the church's mission and the key role it should play as a community of faith. Therefore, an overview of its mission and its role as the church will play a major role in this project.

Above all, Ecclesiology will help in directing the focus for doing ministry that will impact victims of Family Violence. The words of Jesus from Scripture articulate very clear one of the primary missions of the church. In Matt. 5:14, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden."<sup>8</sup>

First and foremost, the church's mission is to be a light in this world. Moreover, the darkest of violence impacting victims of Family Violence need to see a bright light of hope through the mission of the church. Also, this light should lead and guide victims of Family Violence through their darkness from abuse, brutality, pain, and suffering. Thus, offering hope for victims that lead to healing using the principle of Christian forgiveness.

Further, an ecclesiological perspective that informs this foundation is presented. Eric G. Jay in his book, *The Church: Its Changing Image through Twenty Centuries*, points out that the Church has a koinoniac function, which is "to make visible a kind of living picture of the character and composition of the true city of God."<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, it must be visible so people can see its action, thus seen by what it does in the world.<sup>10</sup> The Church cannot just exist as a building in the community where people

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<sup>8</sup> Matt. 5:14 (NRSV).

<sup>9</sup> Eric G. Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image through Twenty Centuries* (London, United Kingdom: SPCK, 1978), 24.

<sup>10</sup> Eric G. Jay, *The Church*, 24.



attend worship and praise God. Jay further argues, “The Church must live on the one hand courageously and joyful, but without triumphalism, in the world; and one with the other, in the spirit of the man for others, agonize with him in the world’s suffering.”<sup>11</sup>

Another ecclesiological perspective is posited by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in one of his letters from prison that represent this view of the Church’s role. He wrote, “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others.”<sup>12</sup> These ecclesiological views provide a clear understanding of the Church’s role, it must be involved in activities beyond its walls.

In addition, the theologian Karl Barth offers this ecclesiological perspective that highlights a role that the Church. He postulates,

God exists for the world, and thus the Church which exists for Him must also exist for the world. The Church is formed under the imperative of the incarnation. There is a radical distinction between Church and the world that can exist because it is a distinction that carries the full weight of the incarnation itself, Jesus in his solidarity with humanity does not lose his identity as the divine Son of God. there is a correspondence between the full weight of human rights and dignity of every human being and his place in the eternal Will of God, where Jesus Christ is his Brother and God is his Father. The message of the Christian is to transmit this knowledge, bringing it to some for the first time and strengthening it in others. There are no insiders and outsiders of the community. To all, the message is the same, the Brotherhood of Christ and the Fatherhood of God.<sup>13</sup>

More importantly, these perspectives challenge the Church to engage in a ministry that addresses the needs of those who are suffering in this evil and wicked day. Further,

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<sup>11</sup> Eric G. Jay, *The Church*, 24.

<sup>12</sup> Eberhard Bethge, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison” (New York, Macmillan, 1972), letter of 30 April 1944. 279-81.

<sup>13</sup> Jon Coutts, *A Shared Mercy: Karl Barth on Forgiveness and the Church* (Downer Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2016), 61.

they provide scholarly insight that is valuable for this project. Equally, they provide a focused objective while doing outreach ministry that will impact victims of Family Violence. Above all, this project's primary mission is all to the glory of God and the love of Jesus Christ.

Additionally, it is a call to duty; the Church must distinguish the difference between maintenance and ministry. It must go beyond the walls of its sanctuary and reach out to bruised, abused, neglected, maltreated, wounded, and heartbroken in the church and its community. Moreover, these theological perspectives offer MCUCC the challenge of being a church on a mission in partnership with God and Jesus Christ. Thus, they will actively participate in the building of the Kingdom of God on earth. Notwithstanding, prioritizing its missionary efforts to a higher level, they will be supporting the needs of the many victims of Family Violence.

### *A Theology of Forgiveness*

The principle of forgiveness is implanted in the fertile soil of the Christian Faith. Forgiveness was offered by Jesus during his earthly ministry and from the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Also, vital to this project, he offered forgiveness during his dying hour on the Cross at Calvary. Many examples can be found in the New Testament such as the penitent woman (Luke 7:36-50), the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12). More importantly, Jesus taught forgiveness in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthews 5-7), the parable of the Prodigal Son reveals the extent of forgiveness he wanted to embrace (Luke 15:11-32). In addition, Matt 6:15 emphasizes the consequences of not having a forgiving heart, thus not forgiving becomes a barrier to the Kingdom of God.

Further, the Lord's Prayer in Matt 6:15 is an example: "but if you do forgive others, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." Therefore, forgiveness is a major theme in Jesus' teachings and his mission. Thus, the principle of forgiveness plays a key role in the spiritual growth of Christians. Most importantly, forgiveness can lead to a stronger relationship with God and can provide internal peace for the believer. MCUCC must engage in preaching, the teaching of forgiveness, also embrace the praxis of forgiveness.

Moreover, a theology of forgiveness supports the theme of this project. Unfortunately, forgiveness is a subject that is often misunderstood. Above all, understanding the Christian principle of forgiveness is vital for this project. Therefore, several scholarly theological perspectives highlight forgiveness, also they will provide a greater understanding of this Christian principle. Further, all Christians must embrace forgiveness however difficult it may seem.

Also, forgiveness is what all Christians have through God's salvific plan, reconciling the world and forgiving us in our sinful nature. Additionally, we must revisit what God has done through Jesus. James K. Voiss in his book, *Rethinking Christian Forgiveness*, postulates that, "For Christians, the way we come to understand God's forgiveness by looking at the life ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus the whole course of the Incarnation."<sup>14</sup>

More importantly, we must see God's forgiveness as an expression of His love and Jesus as our model.

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<sup>14</sup> James K. Voiss, *Rethinking Christian Forgiveness*., 1 online resource vols. (Liturgical Press, 2015. <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4545124>).

Additionally, His uncompromising love embraces us no matter how often we fail.

Consequently, forgiveness is founded in the love of God for His humanity. This type of forgiveness is Divine Forgiveness, for only God has the unconditional love needed to save sinful humanity. The core of forgiveness is God leading us into a better relationship with each other and God Almighty.<sup>15</sup>

Further, Christians forgive out of their appreciation for having been unjustifiably forgiven by God. Also, our awareness of God's forgiving love enables most of us to forgive others. However, many Christians are struggling with the notion of forgiveness. Therefore, the Church must make an all-out effort to teach forgiveness, because too many Christians seem as though they are unable to make the connection between the forgiveness they received from God and its connectedness to their need to forgive others. However, Christians must recognize the underserving forgiveness of God. Also, never forget how His grace and mercy intervened and saved us from our sins.

Although, forgiveness may seem an overwhelming challenge for victims of Family Violence, yet the benefit of healing makes it a vital Christian principle. Additionally, our need to forgive the unforgivable is vital to our mental, physical, and spiritual health. Besides, to allow the pain of resentment, anger, hatred, and revenge to impact our hearts, we block the overflowing love of God.

Voiss believes that most Christians have a problem understanding forgiveness. He posits,

Perhaps they are looking through the wrong lens he argues that instead of considering forgiveness through the lens of sin, the alienation it affects, and God's judgment and mercy, we should view it in terms of "God's desire to give God's self to us in love, a desire that is most fully expressed in the incarnation. The primary activity of God is to reach out to us in love and to seek communion with

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<sup>15</sup> James K. Voiss, *Rethinking Christian Forgiveness*, 20.

us, and God does this through the grace post moderns may not think of themselves as sinners, that is always available to us, through Christ and the spirit, through the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, and through forgiveness. If our thinking about forgiveness begins with this conviction, then God's forgiveness is best understood not as a welcome alternative to God's wrath, but as an invitation to overcome any estrangement between God and ourselves to enter more deeply into a relationship with God.<sup>16</sup>

In the biblical foundations, word study is informative and helpful in this theological foundation as well. W.E. Vine offers New Testament meanings of forgave, forgive, and forgiveness in the Greek language that is meaningful in understanding forgiveness. In his book, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, he offers these meanings to better understand forgiveness. He points out that forgives, forgave, and forgiveness must be studied as kindred terms and they must be understood in the context of their original Greek meaning.<sup>17</sup>

The plural verb forgives *APHIEMI*, to send forth, send away (apo, from, hiemi, to send), denotes, besides its other meanings, to remit or forgive (a) debts, Matt. 6:12; 18:27, 32, these being completely canceled (b) sins, e.g. Matt. 9:2, 5, 6; 12:31-32; Acts 8:22 ("the thought of thine heart") Rom. 4:7; Jas. 5:15; I John 1:9; 2:12.<sup>18</sup>

Further, Vine suggests the verb *APHIEMI* denotes the remission of the penalty due to sinful conduct, God is the one who provides deliverance to the sinner, therefore justly, levied. More importantly, it includes the complete removal of the cause of the offense; such diminution is based upon the explicit and conciliatory sacrifice of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> James K. Voiss, *Rethinking Christian Forgiveness*, 20.

<sup>17</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Westwood, NY: Barbour and Co, 1940), 122.

<sup>18</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

<sup>19</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

Additionally, in the New Testament, it refers to trespasses (paraptoma) e.g., Matt. 6:14, 15; sins (hamartia), e.g., Luke 5:20; debts (opheilema), Matt. 6:12; (opheile), 18:32; (daneion), 18:27; the thought (dianoia) of the heart, Acts 8:22.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, (kalupto), to cover 1 Peter 4:8; Jas. 5:20; and (epikalupto), to cover over, Rom. 4:7, representing the Hebrew words for atonement.<sup>21</sup> Further, Vine identifies forgiveness as two distinctive types, human and divine. He suggests that Human forgiveness is to be strictly analogous to Divine forgiveness, e.g., Matt. 6:12. He goes on to highlight that if certain conditions are fulfilled, there is no limitation Vine to Christ's law of forgiveness, Matt. 18:21, 22. The prerequisites are repentance and confession, Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, for this theological foundation is the act of forgiveness used as the verb CARIZOMI, meaning to bestow a favor unconditionally, whether Divine, Eph 4:32; Col. 2:13; 3:13; or human, Luke 7:42,43 (debt); 2 Cor.2:7, 10; 12:13. The Apostle Paul uses (carizomi) often, however, it is used more as a quasi-judicial act. (apo, from luo to loose), to release is translated "forgive," "ye shall be forgiven," Luke 6:37 (NRSV, "release," "ye shall be released").<sup>23</sup>

However, Aphesis denotes the noun, meaning a dismissal or release, translated in Mark 3:29, Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14, and Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18 these texts use the word

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<sup>19</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

<sup>20</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

<sup>21</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

<sup>22</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

<sup>23</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

“remission” the remission of sins, “forgiveness”. At least seven times remission is followed by “of sins,” and once by “of trespasses.”<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in the NRSV the word *parasis* is used as a passing over, a remission, of sins committed under the old Covenant Rom. 3:25. This was rather a suspension of the just consequence; Acts 17:30, “the times of ignorance God overlooked,” see Ps. 78:38.<sup>25</sup>

Professor Andrew S. Parks in his book, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* offers this theological insight valuable for a better understanding of forgiveness. He argues, “the New Testament teaches the offended to forgive the offender, based on God’s unconditional forgiveness towards him or her (e.g., the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matt 18:23-35.)”<sup>26</sup> The noteworthy point is that human forgiveness is closely connected with divine forgiveness.

While the Hebrew Bible emphasizes divine forgiveness, the New Testament focuses on human forgiveness built on divine forgiveness-the unlimited forgivingness (the active offer of internal attitude and external reconciliation) that the offended can offer the offender because of God’s unconditional forgiveness.<sup>27</sup>

Professor Park's clear meaning of the biblical distinctiveness between divine forgiveness and human forgiveness is key. This clear distinction provides a meaningful understanding of the message Jesus taught and the forgiveness sought on the Cross. Jesus'

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<sup>24</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 122.

<sup>25</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, 123.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 83.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 83.

model demonstrated a praxis of the principle of forgiveness in his dying hour. This insight will support this project as this Christian principle of forgiveness is being taught.

### *A Theology of the Cross*

This theological foundation would not be adequate without a theology of the Cross. Therefore, a clearer understanding of what the Cross event means for the Christian community is presented. The paradoxical episode that took place on that frantic frenetic Friday when Jesus died on the Cross at Calvary must be understood. The Cross for Christian serves as a blessed assurance that God's omnipresence was at present at the death of man's moral failure. Moreover, God was present as Jesus face the realities of our Suffering Savior, is grace and mercy surrounded him. The paradox is Jesus had to die to redeem us, a theology of the Cross reveals the greatest love in human history.

Peter Doble in his book, *The Paradox of Salvation: Luke's theology of the Cross*, points that, "what happened to Jesus was not a humiliating rejection but following the scripture's presentation of God's plan and culminated in the paradox of his salvation."<sup>28</sup>

Paul's letter to the church that meets in the city of Colossae gives the meaning of Christ's death on the Cross. Colossians 1:13-14, For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>29</sup> The Cross event was the redemptive act of God. He was offering His love for his humanity.

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<sup>28</sup> Peter Doble, *The Paradox of Salvation: Luke's theology of the cross*, 79.

<sup>29</sup> Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV)



Further, God was not pleased with our disobedience, rebelliousness against the laws laid down for us to follow. The Divine purpose of creation was to create an everlasting relationship with mankind. He wanted a relationship of love with His created Beings that would be everlasting. Biblical history reveals that we broke the heart of God through our sinful ways, following the dictates of Satan. God regretted that he had made mankind, he would repeople the world. The story of Noah and the Ark, this biblical narrative in Genesis chapter six in the Hebrew Bible, reveals a preponderance of the evidence.

However, even after giving us another chance the corruption of sin continued to disrupt our relationship with God through disobedience to His will. John 3:16 that most well-known scripture still echoes the meaning of the Cross event at Calvary. The Gospel writer John pinned these words, “For God so loved that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.<sup>30</sup> The Cross event had a Divine purpose filled with the love of God, an everlasting relationship with mankind.

Therefore, when the church proclaims this gospel message victims of Family Violence will hear how deep Divine forgiveness is. Further, by having a better understanding of the Cross event they will understand the value of forgiveness. In addition, the church must continue to lift that great hymn, At the Cross by Isaac Watts,

Alas, and did my savior bleed? And did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head For such a worm as I? At the Cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, And the burden of my heart rolled away. rolled away. It was there by faith I received my sight, And now I am happy all the day.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John 3:16 (NIV).

<sup>31</sup> D. E. King, ed., The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal, Washington, DC: Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., 1977, 79.

The lyrics of this song offer meaning to the Cross event. Victims of Family Violence listen again to its words allowing them to linger in their hearts for healing. It tells a story of healing at the Cross on Calvary. Moreover, God has given us the best He had to offer us eternal life, a perpetual relationship with Him.

The Cross event at Calvary must be understood if any healing is to take place for victims of Family Violence. It becomes a matter of reciprocity, God forgave us, Christ taught us to forgive one another, we must practice this Christian principle. Our relationship with God must not be obstructed by maintaining negative emotions towards one another, forgiveness must abound.

The Cross is the monumental symbol of Christendom, the church must point to the Cross to help victims of Family Violence. Divine forgiveness was at the Cross at Calvary. Jesus' model of forgiveness starts with the Cross, His first words recorded in Luke's gospel, was a prayer of forgiveness. Jesus knew the power of Divine forgiveness and the necessity to seek forgiveness for the undeserving. Jesus understood because He the master taught the principle of forgiveness to His disciples. He asked for Divine forgiveness, He understood the depths of the love of our passionate God. The church must revisit its meaning and purpose.

Andrew Park in his book, *From Hurt to Healing*, points out that Divine Forgiveness is “the unlimited forgiveness (the active offer of internal attitude and external reconciliation) that the offended can offer the offender because of God's unconditional forgiveness.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 83.

Park has given a great insight for victims of Family Violence. Looking at the events of Jesus on the Cross at Calvary plays a vital role in understanding Divine Forgiveness.

The Late Dr. Gardner Calvin Taylor presents what happened on the Cross at Calvary. In the closing words of his sermon titled, *Our Great Savoir*, he voices poetic expressions, and homiletical genius in rhythmic fashion a theology of the Cross.

Jesus became obedient to death Now death may not be beautiful, but we all have a right to some dignity as we come to the end. But in your name and in my name, he forfeited that dignity and as was read in the Scripture lesson this morning, underneath that darkening sky, on that one Friday in all of history that saw night twice, he died. In your interests and in mine. Died not in the dignity of privacy but died of public spectacle. Amidst the flies and the curses, and the rattling dice, he died, with no tender hand to mop the death dew from his brow, and with no tender words to soothe his spirit and he took flight to the realms unknown. For you and me, he died of public shame.

Is there's any man or woman here so brutish that he or she can look upon that death on our behalf and walk away indifferent and untouched? Is there any child, any boy, or any girl so stony of heart that his or her spirit is not melted by the dying Savior?

Was it for crimes that I had done?  
He groaned upon the tree.  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun and darkness hide  
And shut his glories in,  
When Christ, the mighty maker a died,  
For man the creature's sin.

And because he did die, our great Savior, we have a great hope. We poor dying men and women, we poor disappearing mortals, have a blessed, imperishable hope.<sup>33</sup>

These words represent expressions of deep conviction and a picturesque view of the paradoxical event on the Cross at Calvary. Truly, Christ our Savior died on the Cross at Calvary for you and me, Divine Forgiveness in action.

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<sup>33</sup> Edward L. Taylor, ed., *The Words of Gardner Taylor* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000). 101.

In conclusion, definitions of theology have provided scholarly insight for this theological foundation. Above all, they will be used to provide a clear understanding of theology in this dissertation. Also, the definitions of practical theology will be used as the rationale for this foundation.

Additionally, the exploration of the three theological themes enhances the efficacy of this work. Ecclesiology offers a clear understanding of the mission and role of the Christian church. Further, a theology of forgiveness provided much-needed insight into the Christian principle of forgiveness. Moreover, it pointed to the vital need for forgiveness, also how essential it is for the healing process for Family Violence victims.

The theology of the Cross is fundamental for understanding Divine Forgiveness. Jesus' model of suffering during his crucifixion is most valuable for this work. Jesus overcame the vicious attack of evil that the world has ever witnessed. However, the evil forces of Satan trying to stop Jesus from fulfilling his divine destiny were not victorious. He gains a victory for all humanity. Further, the model displayed on the Cross is vital for the healing process. Victims must not lose their heart of passion, as Jesus revealed from the Cross, evil lost and passionate love was victorious.

Therefore, victims of Family Violence must look to the Cross and be renewed and healed. The model Jesus set forth in his first words from the Cross is our true hope for healing. Consequently, following Jesus, the crucified one gives victims of brutality, brokenness, and who have suffered pain the model for his followers. This model can help us and bring healing when we have been innocent victims of violence.

These words Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing, Luke 23:34,”<sup>34</sup> still live today, because we all need to experience the power of forgiveness.

Most importantly, Jesus is a true model for practicing the principle of forgiveness, even under the worst conditions. He offers a Suffering Servant model that will last throughout eternity. In addition, to embrace this model, victims will experience a powerful relationship with God. Therefore, it should be implemented in the healing process for victims of Family Violence.

Additionally, if we as Christians would understand the words “letting go,” it would help us. We must not allow anything to separate us from the love of God. as we allow forgiveness to release the pain and hurt, we have experienced. Further, we must not allow evil to take resident in our hearts, it will produce paralyzing consequences.

Vitally important, is when we understand forgiveness, there are choices we must make letting go of resentment, bitterness, hatred, anger, and even thoughts of revenge so that we can experience the joy of our salvation. Those time bomb emotions will harm our future growth mentally, spiritually and rob us of joy.

Moreover, as one of its major promoters of moral influence, MCUCC must play an active role in addressing Family Violence for its members and the Bagley community. Also, it must never forget, Jesus heard the cries and felt the pain of those who were closest to him. So, the church must hear, see, and respond to those who live in closest proximity and be an advocate for those who are victims of Family Violence.

Professor Park postulates a significant point about the church and forgiveness. Park argued that “As the earthly agency of Jesus Christ and God, the church has been

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<sup>34</sup> Luke 23:34 (NRSV).

identified as the forgiving community the community to proclaim the forgiveness of God and to foster forgiveness for one another.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Andrew S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 83.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

In this Interdisciplinary Foundations, the field of Psychology has been chosen as the interdisciplinary field for this doctoral thesis. The interdisciplinary theory selected to support this thesis is the Theoretical Basis of Family Violence. This theoretical perspective presents psychological theories that support this doctoral thesis project.

In contrast, the scientific method of Independence is used for the biblical and historical foundations. However, the scientific method of Dialogue is used in contrast with the theological foundations. Further, the Independence model states that science and religion can both be true as long they are kept to their separate domains.

Ian Barbour postulates that,

Science can answer questions about what exists and how it works. Christianity can answer questions about why things are the way they are, ultimate origins, teleology, and ethics. God is the Creator, (the why) and evolution is the process (the how). In simplest terms, then issues like evolution, technology, and medicine to science, while ethics, purpose, values, and ultimate questions belong to religion.<sup>1</sup>

However, in The Dialogue model, Barbour points out that, “science and religion as partners in conversation, with each bringing their unique knowledge and expertise to enrich the other.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: History and Contemporary Issue* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1997), 78.

<sup>2</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science*, 78.

Therefore, the Theoretical Basis for Family Violence will be pursued with these differences in mind. This theoretical approach offers insight into ways victims of Family Violence receive a therapeutic intervention. Thus, an exploration of this theoretical approach will provide insight from psychology that will impact this thesis final project. The objective is to select the most viable psychological theories that will offer insight into behavior that contributes to Family Violence.

Further, a discussion of the theme, the hypothesis, and the solution will be given for the doctoral project. In addition, a brief overview of the biblical foundations, historical foundations, and theological foundations are presented in contrast with the theoretical basis of Family Violence. Moreover, the knowledge gained from this theoretical approach will provide valuable information that will impact this project.

The theme of this doctoral thesis is, A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process of the Victims of Family Violence. The theme is based on the notion that the model of forgiveness that Jesus displays from the Cross will offer hope and healing for victims of Family Violence. For example, as we view the horrific suffering and pain our savior's suffering on the Cross it depicts violence perpetrated on an innocent man, undeserved violence.

Moreover, to view Jesus on the Cross and the display of passion of seeking forgiveness for his perpetrators is the key. Also, by looking at the suffering and pain of the Cross, victims will be able to experience a kinship with Jesus. Most important, Jesus was seeking divine forgiveness for those who did not deserve it. Moreover, Jesus not only offers a passionate prayer of forgiveness, but he also presented a model of the master teacher practicing the principle of forgiveness he taught.



Jesus' model of forgiveness teaches victims of Family Violence that he understands their struggle. The reality is that the Christian principle of forgiveness spoken from the Cross reveals how far God is willing to go to maintain a relationship with us. In his humanity, Jesus offers victims who suffer from the realities of Family Violence a model for their healing process. Further, the model of a Suffering Servant and his willingness to seek forgiveness highlights the value of forgiveness.

Additionally, Jesus while offering a passionate prayer of forgiveness was also revealing the need to have a forgiving heart. More importantly, Jesus models what he taught, that forgiveness is essential for Christians to practice. Therefore, there should be nothing that separates us from our relationship with God.

The hypothesis presented in the final project presupposes that if an outreach ministry is developed to support and help victims of Family Violence, then the cycle of violence will be reduced. Further, by providing an opportunity for victims to pursue healing using the Christian principle of forgiveness lives will be changed for the greater good. This outreach ministry model can offer a solution to the problem of violence by helping reduce the cycle of violence in the city of Detroit and the Bagley community. Also, it will help solve the problem of self-destructive behavior.

Therefore, using the psychological theories found in the theoretical basis of Family Violence will provide useful insight into the causes of this type of violence as an independent view. Further, these psychological theories can play an essential role in this doctoral thesis project. They will provide best practices and point to solutions that this doctoral thesis project use in developing an outreach ministry model.

More importantly, they will be used as a critical tool when supporting and helping victims of Family Violence.

Additionally, the psychological theories offer essential insight that will address the problem in the thesis project. The problem presented in the thesis project centers around the social crisis of Family Violence and the cycle of violence in the city of Detroit and the Bagley community. Further, the biblical teachings on forgiveness in collaboration with these psychological theories serve as a viable resource to address the needs of victims of Family Violence.

Family Violence has a broad meaning; however, specific definitions are being provided in this thesis. Spousal or partner violence can range from mild physical aggression, such as pushing or slapping, to violent physical assault and homicide. It also includes spousal or partner rape.<sup>3</sup>

However, child and elder maltreatment are divided into two categories: intentional acts of commission (abuse) or omission (neglect). Physical abuse is defined as non-accidental acts of commission by an adult that leave signs of physical harm. Physical abuse can vary from overzealous spanking or hitting to acts that break bones or cause death.<sup>4</sup>

Physical neglect, on the other hand, consists of failure to provide the proper or necessary care or support for a child or elder person's well-being. Acts of neglect include inadequate nutrition, abandonment, and refusal of needed medical care. Then there is

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<sup>3</sup> "Family Violence - IResearchNet," Psychology, n. d.  
<http://psychology.iresearchnet.com/developmental-psychology/family-violence-psychology/>.

<sup>4</sup> Family Violence - IResearchNet," Psychology, n. d.  
<http://psychology.iresearchnet.com/developmental-psychology/family-violence-psychology/>

sexual abuse, defined as sexual interactions with a child or nonconsensual adult for purposes of sexual stimulation. Examples include rape, incest, sodomy, oral copulation, fondling, and exhibitionism.

Moreover, psychological, or emotional maltreatment is especially difficult to define. However, psychological maltreatment of children consists of acts of omission or commission that damage immediately or ultimately behavioral, cognitive, affective, or physical functioning. Examples of psychological maltreatment include acts of rejecting, terrorizing, isolating, exploiting, and promoting antisocial or illegal behavior (gang membership and drug use, for example).<sup>5</sup>

The biblical foundations provided for this doctoral thesis project reveal the need for a Christian praxis of forgiveness. Further, it provides an avenue that can lead to healing for victims of Family Violence. Moreover, the defined components of Family Violence reveal the trying consequences that impact victims of Family Violence. It depicts cruelty, child abuse, physical assault, and battery between adults calls for the need for crisis intervention. However, most horrific is the physical abuse and physical neglect of children and lack of respect for their presence that leads to devastating consequences.

Nonetheless, the model set forth in Luke's gospel of Jesus depicts the suffering and pain on the Cross at Calvary and his first last words on the Cross are vital for this doctoral thesis project. Most importantly, it offers symbolic hope for the innocent victims experiencing suffering and pain from Family Violence. In addition, from these words in Luke's gospel, he presents visible evidence that Jesus not only used the principle of forgiveness in his dying hour, but he also practiced what he taught.

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<sup>5</sup> "Family Violence - IResearchNet," Psychology, n. d.  
<http://psychology.iresearchnet.com/developmental-psychology/family-violence-psychology/>.

The prayer for forgiveness voiced in Luke was his first words from the Cross at Calvary, according to Luke 23:34 found in this periscope:

- 32 Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him.  
 33 When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.  
 34 [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."] And they cast lots to divide his clothing.  
 35 And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!"  
 36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine  
 37 and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"  
 38 There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."<sup>6</sup>

The model of forgiveness that Jesus exemplifies reveals that he experienced pain and suffering. Therefore, presenting this model of Jesus seeking forgiveness of his persecutors is the key to this project. However, because of the misconception of forgiveness and its biblical meaning, the need for a clearer understanding of forgiveness is being addressed.

The biblical foundations have highlighted the biblical meaning of forgiveness found in the exegesis of Luke 23:34 on what Jesus taught and biblical notes presented in the biblical foundations. Thus, an overview is presented to help give clarity to the Christian meaning of forgiveness.

Herbert Lockyer, in his book, *Everything Jesus Taught*, wrote what Jesus taught about forgiveness is key. In an introductory paragraph, he offers a meaningful understanding of forgiveness. He suggests that forgiveness has played a vital role in our

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 23: 32-38 (NRSV)

salvation. Further, forgiveness consists of two components, God's forgiveness of man, and man's forgiveness of man.<sup>7</sup>

He defines forgiveness in this manner: to discharge, dismiss, acquit, let loose from, to remit a debt or sin, to pardon.<sup>8</sup> Also, forgiveness denotes giving up an inward feeling of anger and resentment, the elimination of a feeling of anger, and transformation to a feeling of favor and love.<sup>9</sup>

The consequences due to violence, its severity, and nature cause victims to experience feelings of negative emotions. It is the internalizing of feelings of resentment, anger, bitterness, hatred, and revenge that require healing. These emotions impact the spiritual and mental health of victims of Family Violence. Therefore, the Christian principle of forgiveness can play a critical role in helping victims of Family Violence overcome these negative emotions.

Lockyer offers victims of violence a biblical understanding of forgiveness that is essential to their healing. He writes, forgiveness can be viewed from three basic aspects, as a universal necessity, a divine prerogative, and a human obligation. First, viewed from (Rom. 3:10, 23), "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, "There is none righteous, no, not one". Therefore, we are all called to pray, "Forgive us our debts" or "trespasses." Lockyer believes we have all broken the laws of God and need his forgiveness that we may be restored to a right relationship with God. Pointing to Jesus he states, "Jesus, who had much to say about forgiveness, never

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<sup>7</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 122.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 122.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 156.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 157.

sought it from God simply because, as he confessed, “I do always those things that please [my Father].”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, as the sinless one, Jesus never infringed any divine commandment and so has no cause to seek God’s forgiveness.”<sup>12</sup> Further, Jesus never harmed anyone during His sojourn on earth, He never had to say He was sorry.

Lockyer interjects the thought that divine forgiveness is of great significance for all who have sinned against God. He goes on and validates this thought by pointing to (Ps. 32:1; 103:3), Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, also knowing that his sin has been covered by the precious blood of Jesus. This notion reveals that there is a universal necessity to seek God’s forgiveness.<sup>13</sup>

Another aspect of forgiveness is that it is a divine prerogative, only God forgives sin. Jesus as Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins according to (Matt.9:6). He was God’s representative. In (Mark 2:5) “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee”. Jesus had the right and authority to forgive sins, He was God in the human flesh.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, Jesus reveals the divine prerogative of forgiveness when he asked the Father to forgive sinners, (Luke 23:34). “Father, forgive them; for they not what they do.” Luke 23:34). Lockyer offers another instructive note when he suggests that: “Jesus, speaking out of a divine consciousness, implied, “They do not know who it is that they are crucifying.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 157.

<sup>12</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 157.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 157.

<sup>14</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 157.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 157.

Moreover, when Jesus made his plea for forgiveness it was vital, he desired that their sin act needed forgiveness. Further, the intercessory prayer may have been His desire for the Father to open their eyes and see the sinful role they were playing. However ignorant they may have been, the corruption of sin was not exonerated, but Jesus, the prayer of forgiveness opened the door for the divine prerogative to take place.<sup>16</sup>

More importantly, Jesus had taught forgiveness in (Luke 17: 3-4), “If he repents forgive him.” But, devoid of authentic repentance for sin could not be forgiven, therefore divine prerogative could not take place. Jesus taught that with this condition met there were no restrictions on forgiveness, (Matt.18:21-35), “until seventy times seven”, in other words perpetually or as often as needed.<sup>17</sup>

The final aspect of forgiveness that Jesus taught was a human obligation. The primary aspect of this reality is our forgiveness of each other. Using scripture Lockyer gives reference to the following passage, (Matt.6:14-15); “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”<sup>18</sup>

Further, he says, “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Luke 6:37); “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.” (Matt. 18:35); “Likewise, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 160.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 161.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

The bottom line here is that we must forgive each other; it is our human obligation if we seek the forgiveness God is offering us. Further, this teaching of Jesus emphasizes our human obligation that requires us to love one another, and through this love, we can forgive. Therefore, the heart is involved, God requires us to love one another, mutual forgiveness opens the door to receive divine forgiveness.<sup>20</sup>

Most important, divine forgiveness offers us an opportunity to right relationship with God, as well as a harmonious relationship with each other through human forgiveness. Therefore, when victims of Family Violence recognize the true meaning of the Christian principle of forgiveness the possibility of healing can take place. Too often a lack of understanding of the teachings of Holy Scripture many Christians is unable to receive the full power of God's Word.

Further, the concluding thought of Lockyer is vital for understanding the Christian principle of forgiveness., he states, "We cannot measure the debt of gratitude we owe him for the forgiveness of our sins and then the debt we must discharge toward those who sin against us."<sup>21</sup> These words are crucial when victims of violence are deciding to forgive their perpetrators.

Although forgiveness may be a challenging concept, nonetheless a better understanding of its meaning and our human obligation to forgive are keys to the healing process. Most importantly, our relationship with God is crucial to our spiritual health and mental well-being, thus we benefit when we practice the Christian principle of forgiveness.

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<sup>20</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.

<sup>21</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *Everything Jesus Taught*, 165.



In contrast, the scientific model of Independence will be used in conjunction with the biblical and historical foundations. Therefore, considering this model the basis of Family Violence is explored. The psychological theories of this approach will be used to identify the impact violence can have on its victims.

Moreover, each psychological theory is being discussed to select the most viable theories that impact this doctoral thesis project. In addition, these psychological perspectives are used to address the mental needs of victims of Family Violence. Therefore, the theories represented in this psychological approach can be helpful in the healing process of victims of Family Violence. However, these psychological theories are viewed from the notion of the Independent Scientific model and the Dialogue model. Nonetheless, this collaborative effort must be used to gain insight that will support Family Violence victims.

The theoretical basis of Family Violence offer, the following psychological theories for consideration. Four major psychological theories are used that address Family Violence. Each psychological theory will be discussed, but only those that show relevance will be explored in detail. They are (1) psychoanalytic theory FV, (2) social theory of FV, cognitive-behavioral theory of FV, and (4) family and systems theory of FV.<sup>22</sup>

The psychoanalytic theory focuses on the individual internal psychological process that creates a need to be abusive or to accept abusive behavior.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> M.E. Hyde-Nolan, and T. Juliao, "Theoretical basis for family violence." *Family violence: What health care providers need to know* (2012): 5-16.

<sup>23</sup> Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory Developmental Psychology* Vol 28 [5] Sep 1992, 776-786.

The social theory concentrates on how aggression, abuse, and violence are learned and transferred by individual members of the family.<sup>24</sup> Cognitive-behavioral theory's emphasis is on how aggression, abuse, and violence are learned and transferred among individuals.<sup>25</sup> This theory helps explain why abusive behaviors are sometimes transmitted from generation to generation while at other times they are not.

Finally, family and systems theory offers insight into the events that occur within the family system. Although each of these theories addresses Family Violence, only three will be offered in contrast. They are social learning, cognitive-behavioral, and family and systems theory theories of family violence that will inform this project. These theories will help provide a better understanding of the impact violence create for victims of Family Violence and provide vital knowledge that will impact this project.

The social learning theory of family violence addresses life stressors/ life events or experiences. Examples are job loss, an extramarital affair, moving to a new home, or paying bills. These stressors can directly impact husband-to-wife violence. Further, an individual with a personal history of growing up in a violent family can experience low marital satisfaction and social isolation.<sup>26</sup>

Another experience related to stressors is child abuse when an individual has learned to use violence during childhood and believes that hitting family members was justified. This theory offers insight into the factors that contribute to a violent personality.

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<sup>24</sup> Gershoff, E.T., Corporal punishment by parents and associated child behaviors and experiences: a meta-analytic and theoretical review. *Psychological bulletin*, 128 (4). 2002, 539.

<sup>25</sup> M.E. Hyde-Nolan, and T. Juliao, 12.

<sup>26</sup> M.E. Hyde-Nolan, and T. Juliao, 12.

The cognitive-behavioral theory points to social learning when an individuals' social behavior is violent. They are observing and imitating violent behavior, this behavior is often found in children who model the behavior of violent parents. This kind of aggressive behavior is learned through operant conditioning.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, this behavior is strengthened when positive or negative reinforcement is presented.<sup>28</sup> The cognitive-behavioral theory explains why some people in the family are violent and why many people are susceptible to violent tendencies and violence toward others.

These theories are important for this doctoral thesis as they inform the implementation of the final project. More importantly, they offer a better understanding of violent human behavior. Also, they help explain why some people are more likely to become violent. Further, these theories reveal the reality of violence and the impact it has on many who suffer due to Family Violence.

It is imperative that Christians fully grasp the devastating impact violence can have on individuals who face Family Violence. In contrast to the theoretical approach, the biblical foundation of this thesis focuses on the Christian principle of forgiveness, the bedrock on which this work stand. It presents the rationale for the practice of the Christian principle of forgiveness

. Most importantly, the model Jesus presents during his crucifixion reveals the impact of violence. Further, victims of family violence have gone through pain and suffering because of violence and need a healing model. Additionally, Jesus seeking

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<sup>27</sup> M.E. Hyde-Nolan, and T. Juliao, 11.

<sup>28</sup> M.E. Hyde-Nolan, and T. Juliao, 12.

forgiveness in his suffering and painful hours can offer hope to those victims of Family Violence.

Moreover, Jesus taught human forgiveness and practiced it on the Cross. Jesus understood the value of forgiveness. Further, he modeled a passionate heart despite the undeserved suffering and pain. Therefore, victims of Family Violence can turn to Jesus for healing and trusting what he taught about the principle of forgiveness. The model on the Cross is key to the healing process. On the Cross, Christians see a Suffering Servant and a master teacher who practiced the principle of forgiveness.

Although these psychological theories of Family Violence reveal the impact violence has on the human psyche, Jesus' model of forgiveness addresses matters of the human mind and soul. He was destined to suffer for the greater good of all humanity. He brought God's salvific plan as Savior of the world. Hence for those who face human suffering through violence must understand he suffered and died for us. He had a divine purpose, to model for us a Suffering Servant. Therefore, when we experience suffering and pain, we forgive because he taught and practiced the principle of forgiveness.

In comparison, the historical foundations focused on the African Church Independent Movement and African American Church Independent Movement. This history revealed the suffering and pain that Africans faced as they embraced their new faith. Also, the history of the African American church involves its early struggles in moving towards freedom.

The psychological perspective identified in the historical foundations' overview highlighted the impact trauma had on slaves during the Slave Era in this country.

The psychological theory involved is Violence as Trauma which is among the Family Systems theories used in the theoretical basis for Family Violence.

This theory suggests that victims of abuse process this experience of violence by developing internal defenses in their personality. Such trauma disrupts the ways information is managed because the sensory stimuli enter the brain's limbic system. Thus, when the limbic system is overridden due to the high level of stress and trauma, the inability to handle the stressor can cause the individual to switch to survival techniques known as psychological numbing.<sup>29</sup>

The historical foundation revealed a traumatic episode of violence during the African Independence Movement. This traumatic event is only one example of the African's many traumatic experiences during the Slave Era during as the African church moved towards its independence. This example is reflective of the struggles they faced while embracing their new Christian Faith. One slave worshipper recalls, "the white folks would come in when the colored people would have a prayer meeting and whip every one of them. Most of them thought that when colored people were praying it was against them."<sup>30</sup>

This episode reveals that the African Church members were faced with traumatic experiences during their attempt to serve a faithful God. However, they faced the ever-present evil of violence. Also, this experience during prayer must have been a traumatizing event.

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<sup>29</sup> M.E. Hyde-Nolan, and T. Juliao, 8.

<sup>30</sup> Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin 'On*, 250.

The psychological perspective in psychology that is valuable for this thesis is Violence as Trauma. This perspective pointed out this traumatic effect for some victims created a numbing effect.

This historical event impacts this thesis through its historic significance providing evidence that the African Church Independence Movement was a vital necessity. Moreover, events of this nature serve as an example of the power of God moving in history to deliver his people from traumatic circumstances. Further, the African American Church must continue this legacy by helping victims of Family Violence as one of its missions.

The theological foundation for this doctoral thesis presents a theology of forgiveness. However, because the relationship between theology and psychology is not clear, the scientific model of Dialogue is employed in this analysis. This Dialogue model suggests there can be overlapping interests without crossing disciplinary boundaries. Further, as a model for connecting faith and religion that includes “questions that lie at the edge or boundary of, is questions raised by science, but they are never able to answer.”<sup>31</sup>

The theological foundation explores a theology of forgiveness. Using the Dialogue model, the psychological and theological approaches regarding forgiveness is crucial in understanding forgiveness from both perspectives. One example of Dialogue is the psychological perspective on the concept of forgiveness.

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<sup>31</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: History and Contemporary Issue* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1997), 78.

The discussion centers around the word “harm” that dialogue with theology and psychology exists. The psychological literature on forgiveness reveals a reasonable understanding of harm to the victim of violence. However, there is a need to make clear the matter of harm. Further, the issue is between moral harm and forgiveness in general.

Moral harm is viewed as a violation against an individual rather than forgiveness. The problem for the psychological community is their interpretation and the language available for them to address forgiveness. There is a matter of terms to use to define the agent of the harm. For example, the terms “wrongdoer,” perpetrator,” and “offender” point to moral harm and have legal connotations.

Ann Macaskill argues, “The term forgiveness does not appropriately describe the adjustments made in response to aversive events outside anyone’s control. Rather, it seems that individuals reduce their anger and come to accept the situations that involve acceptance that has occurred.”<sup>32</sup> For her, the matter is acceptance rather than forgiveness, and she points to blaming as illogical.

However, Enright and associates, in challenging this notion, center their argument around a “definitional drift” that creeps into the understanding of forgiveness. They go on to point out that there is a link between forgiveness and moral harm.<sup>33</sup>

Nonetheless, Theology is much clearer about what forgiveness is and the reason victims are to forgive. The theology of forgiveness is built on a biblical foundation and is a Christian principle. For example, the act of forgiveness used as the verb CARIZOMI,

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<sup>32</sup> James K. Voiss, *Rethinking Christian Forgiveness: theological, philosophical, and psychological explorations* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 96.

<sup>33</sup> James K. Voiss, *Rethinking Christian Forgiveness*, 97.

meaning to bestow a favor unconditionally, whether Divine, Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13; 3:13, or human, Luke 7:42-43 (debt); 2 Cor.2:7, 10; 12:13.<sup>34</sup>

More importantly, this act of forgiveness is rational and good reasoning. Further, there are benefits for forgiving others: God's involvement and the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, theology presents a better spiritual and mental health benefit. For example, Christians forgive to maintain a stronger relationship with God.

Another reason forgiving will improve mental health is that resentment, anger, bitterness, and the notion of revenge are removed. These benefits provide a better life for the Christian believer. Moreover, believers can experience the joy of their salvation, experiencing renewed spiritual wholeness and a stronger relationship with God. Thus, theology and psychology must continue in dialogue. The psychological community must first be willing to acknowledge its limitation in understanding the divine principles found in theology.

In conclusion, the scientific model of dialogue is helpful; however, it must be an open dialogue. Until the psychological community is open to the Christian principle of forgiveness, the scientific model of dialogue cannot continue. Further, the psychological perspectives may support the Christian community as they address the human psyche. However, there is a need for a better understanding of the matter of the soul.

Also, the continued dialogue between theology and psychology is essential to this thesis final project.

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<sup>34</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, (Westwood, NJ: Barbour and Company, Inc., Vol. 1, 1952), 123



The theoretical basis of Family Violence can be used to support the efficacy of the project. The important fact is that each of these foundations and the theoretical perspectives seems to offer victims of Family Violence a better life.

Most importantly, these approaches to the problem of Family Violence are welcomed to the table for their help and support. Thus, the primary objective remains the same, to provide help for the suffering and painful experience of Family Violence. This outreach ministry model can work in a partnership with the psychological community to provide support for victims of Family Violence.

Therefore, the impact of violence can be reduced to some level of peace during the healing process. Further, practicing the Christian principle of forgiveness is given as the most viable approach because Jesus is the model as a Suffering Servant. In addition, forgiveness as a human obligation is a Christian principle and provides relief from resentment, anger, and revenge.

More valuable, forgiveness leads to a stronger relationship with God and better adherence to the teachings of Jesus. Thus, forgiveness provides healing for mental and spiritual growth that leads to love, joy, and peace in life. To God be the glory, for all things are possible when we trust Him through the healing process. Therefore, we practice the Christian principle of forgiveness and wait on God.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PROJECT ANALYSIS**

The theme of this project is “A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process for Victims of Family Violence.” The primary objective of this project is to help project participants understand the social issue of Family Violence and the devastating effects it has on the physical and mental health of its victims.

In addition, the project is presented to offer a ministry outreach model that will help and support Victims of Family Violence. To this end, the Christian principle of forgiveness is being studied to establish a foundation for helping and supporting the healing process of victims of Family Violence. Also, the project will emphasize the key impact forgiveness can have on the healing process through preaching, teaching, and practicing Christian forgiveness.

Most important, both church members and community members who face this type of violence can be healed. Essential to this possibility is to focus on the biblical model of the most violent attack in human history of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus’ model of forgiveness presented on the Cross is a sterling example of the value he placed on forgiveness. Moreover, with Jesus as the model for practicing forgiveness, the church can be moved to help in the healing process for victims of violence.

This project aims, to impact the lives of victims of Family Violence by developing an outreach ministry model that helps and supports victims during the healing process. Moreover, it is designed as an outreach effort supporting the ministry of Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ (MCUCC) to develop a well-defined outreach ministry model. This outreach ministry can offer a bright light of hope in the city of Detroit and the Bagley community. Also, it will serve the needs of some of MCUCC members and its community who have been affected by Family Violence.

This outreach ministry will carry out the mandate of God by serving his people and carrying out the mission set by Christ to set at liberty, the bruised, broken, and downtrodden. Thus, the expected results of this project outreach ministry model are to provide crisis intervention for Family Violence victims. Additionally, it will offer a positive outreach ministry effort to help and support victims of Family Violence as they go through the healing process.

Such an outreach ministry will provide a haven for God's people to experience renewal through practicing the Christian principle of forgiveness. Consequently, victims of Family Violence impacted by this violence can receive the needed help and support. The overall mission is to combat the horrific social evil of Family Violence and offer those who are in pain and suffering a deeper spiritual and fruitful life. The project was announced two weeks before its presentation.

The Hypothesis: If participants receive training about and practice the principles of forgiveness, then they will possess information and methodologies to minimize and/or eliminate the chances of violence occurring between family members.

The problem addressed in this project is that Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ does not offer a well-defined outreach ministry model that specifically supports and assists persons who experience Family Violence in the church and the surrounding community.

### *The Approach and Venue*

The project consists of six weeks with three bible studies on Divine Forgiveness, three on Human Forgiveness, three sermon series, and lessons on Family Violence and Principles of Forgiveness. The preaching series was conducted at the Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ using Facebook Live media streaming to equip members with information to develop an outreach ministry for helping victims of Family Violence. Using technology, a private Facebook Group was established to upload videos of lessons and sermons each week which could be viewed at the participants' convenience.

### Project Calendar

Start Date: November 6, 2021

#### Week 1

Sermon# 1 Divine Forgiveness Genesis 9:9

30 minutes Introduction to Project

20 minutes Pre-Project Assessments

30 minutes Old Testament Bible Study, Theme: Divine Forgiveness

10-minute Q&A Session

30 minutes Prayer and Lesson on Types of Family Violence

10 minutes Q & A Session and Closing Prayer

#### Week 2

10 minutes Greetings

30 minutes Old Testament Bible Study, Theme: Divine Forgiveness

10-minute Q&A Session

30 minutes Prayer and Lesson on The Consequences of Family Violence  
10-minute Q&A Session and Closing prayer

### Week 3

Sermon #2 God's Substitute Isaiah 53:3-5

10 minutes Greetings

30 minutes Prayer and Old Testament Bible Study, Theme: Divine Forgiveness

10-minute Q&A Session

30 minutes Prayer and Lesson on Misconceptions of Forgiveness

10-minute Q&A Session and Closing prayer

### Week 4

10 minutes Greetings

30 minutes Prayer and New Testament Bible Study, Theme: Human Forgiveness

10-minute Q&A Session

30 minutes Prayer and Lesson on Forgiveness as a Healing Process

Q&A Session and Closing prayer

### Week 5

10 minutes Greetings

30 minutes Prayer and New Testament Bible Study, Theme: Human Forgiveness

10-minute Q&A Session

30 minutes Prayer and Lesson on Andrew Park's "From Hurt to Healing"

Q&A Session and Closing prayer

### Week 6

Sermon# 3. A Model of Forgiveness Luke 23:34

10 minutes Greetings

30 minutes Prayer and New Testament Bible Study, Theme: Human Forgiveness

10-minute Q&A Session

30 minutes Prayer and Lesson on Christian Principle of Forgiveness

Q&A Session

20 minutes Post-Project Assessment

Closing prayer

### *Methodology*

A multi-methods approach was used in this project to lay a foundation for a more structured approach for its implementation.

Three research instruments were used before and after the project to test the hypothesis.

A fourth instrument was used only after the sermons to determine their effectiveness.

### *Methodologies Used to Assess Effectiveness*

The following instruments were used to assessment the effectiveness of the Project.

**LIKERT SCALE SURVEY:** This survey used the five-point Likert scale model to measure participants' attitudes or opinions. Questions were asked that participants would be rated on their level of agreement. They were allowed to express how much they agree or disagree with ten questions or statements used in the survey. Further, each of the five responses had a numerical value that was used to measure the agreement under investigation. Through this model quantitative data were obtained. That helps to validate the need-based assessment of an outreach model of ministry for victims of Family Violence.

**QUESTIONNAIRE:** A Questionnaire using Open-ended questions that did not provide participants with a predetermined set of answer choices, instead it allowed the participants to provide responses in their own words. However, using these open-ended questions allows them to take a holistic and comprehensive look at the issues of a well-defined outreach ministry. Further, the open-ended responses permitted participants to have more options and opinions, giving the data more diversity than would be possible with a closed-question or forced-choice survey measure.

**SHORT-ANSWER TEST:** The participants were required to insert a word, or words, to complete a sentence, or a series of sentences.

Although, short-answer questions can be used to assess different types of skills and knowledge, the focus in this instance was on assessing knowledge of the Christian principle of forgiveness. Moreover, this Multi-Methods Research approach of both qualitative and quantitative data was essential for analysis and support of this project research. According to John W. Creswell, The distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words(qualitative) rather than numbers(quantitative), or better yet, closed-ended questions and responses (quantitative hypotheses) or opened questions and responses (qualitative interviews questions).<sup>1</sup> Creswell further postulates that the qualitative method provides expression to understanding the social problems that contribute to individuals and groups.<sup>2</sup>

The pre-project forgiveness surveys (10) five-point Likert Scale responses (Appendix B) and pre-project forgiveness questionnaire (six) open-ended questions, (Appendix C), pre-project forgiveness short-answer survey (ten) questions (Appendix D), a preaching response survey (10) five-point Likert Scale responses (Appendix E) were used for data collection.

### *The Venue*

The project was implemented at the Mayflower Congregational Church of Church in the city of Detroit, Michigan. This is an African American church with an active membership of 150 members located in the Bagley community of the city. It was established in 1930 in Northwest Detroit. Mayflower to continue its mission, to preach

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Creswell., and J. David Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach* (Sage publications, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*,

Christ's gospel of goodwill and reconciliation, to change lives for Christ, to quicken civic righteousness, to promote peace and justice in all the earth is the task of the Church.

Presently, the church has ministered to the community with a major food ministry that has served thousands of people. Through its outreach efforts Mayflower hosts three AA groups weekly and has the only all-female AA group in the city of Detroit. It has adopted the neighborhood elementary school in the Bagley community and supports students, faculty, and parents. Further, Mayflower is the meeting spot for book clubs, the church offers monthly jazz concerts for the community, and serves the benevolent needs of the community in many ways.

It is 60% female and 40%, male. There are about thirty active young people. The current congregation is a 70% highly educated membership. They are a middle-class and working-class congregation. Moreover, Mayflower is a progressive congregation of the United Church of Christ (UCC). Mayflower has had 14 pastors in its history most of them have had short tenures. However, the current pastor, Rev. James M. Curenton has served the congregation for over twenty-two (22) years.

### *Implementation*

This project was implemented at the Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ in the city of Detroit. There were a few challenges we faced due to the COVID-19 restrictions placed on churches. However, by the grace of God, innovative and creative efforts were made possible through technology and the project was able to be completed.

The initial meeting of the participants was held at the church under COVID -19 portal call. The mask mandates and spacing among participants were all followed.



During this first in-person meeting (ten) participants agreed to support this project. From this group, four volunteers agreed to serve as context associates, Antonio Matthews, Victoria Curenton, Preston West, and Gwendolyn Watkins. They were each given a copy of my Synergy Paper. This provided them with a clearer understanding of my mission and objective for doing this project. Further, all participants were presented with the primary objective of the project. Those who volunteered were given a blank pre-survey, along with the Informed Consent Form (Appendix A) which were completed during the initial meeting at the church.

The pre-project forgiveness survey (10) five-point Likert Scale responses (Appendix B) and pre-project forgiveness questionnaire (six) open-ended questions, (Appendix C), pre-project forgiveness short-answer survey (ten) questions (Appendix D), a preaching response survey (10) five-point Likert Scale responses (Appendix E), a Human Informed Consent Form (Appendix A). These forms were collected by the context associates and given to me for safekeeping. In addition, each participant was given a hand-out that contained Old and New Testament scriptures to reflect on during the project. They were instructed on the purpose of each document.

Also, participants were informed about the challenges that we might face because of the COVID-19 restrictions. The participants understood the challenges because the church was now using Facebook Live Streaming during its worship service. However, at the first session, we did face some difficulty; several participants were unable to connect with this project group online. This was resolved by changing from Google Meet format to establishing a private Facebook Group page.

This allowed for greater participation as well as eliminating time constraints and giving flexibility to view the lessons and see the sermon series preached from the pulpit at the church.

Nonetheless, we agreed that using this private Facebook Group page was much easier for the members to access. The private Facebook Group was the MCUCC Project Group, each participant was invited by me as the administer. This page allowed unlimited video time it was useful as it enabled me to communicate with each member of the group. Also, it allowed me to upload each bible study lesson as well as lessons on forgiveness. Also, a video of the first Bible Study lesson was added for those who had problems getting online during the first session.

Further, I was able to add videos from YouTube that reinforced the subjects of my lessons on forgiveness. For instance, in the lesson on the Misconception of Forgiveness, a YouTube video was uploaded for their use. In addition, for the lesson on Forgiveness as a Healing Process, a YouTube video was uploaded to reinforce this lesson as well.

Moreover, during these video sessions, participants had the opportunity to do the Q&A sessions through the use of the comment section for each lesson. The Facebook Group page eliminated scheduling conflicts as well as gave participants flexibility. For instance, one participant had relocated to Georgia, yet through this Facebook Group page, she was able to participate with the help of her granddaughter.

At the end of the project, each participant was given post-survey assessments, nine given at the church and one online. Finally, we met as a group on the MCUCC Project Group page to discuss their opinions of this project and the method we used to

complete it. The results of the project data are found in the summary of learning of this analysis.

### *Summary of Learning*

In this summary of learning, the impact of the final project will be presented through the results of four assessment instruments. The Hypothesis was: If participants receive training about and practice the principles of forgiveness, then they will possess information and methodologies to minimize and/or eliminate the chances of violence occurring between family members. The effectiveness of the training upon the 10 participants was measured with a Forgiveness Survey, a Forgiveness Questionnaire, a Short-Answer Survey, and a Preaching Response Survey. Those results are shown in Tables 1-4.

### *Pre- and Post-Project Forgiveness Survey Group Results*

The ratings are as follows: (5) Participant strongly agreed (SA) with the statement. (4) Participant agreed (A) with the statement. (3) Participant was undecided (U) about their position regarding the statement. (2) Participant disagreed (D) with the statement. (1) Participant strongly disagreed (SD) with the statement.

*Table 1. Group Results for Pre- and Post-Project Forgiveness Survey*

Item #1. The church should play a role in helping victims of Family Violence.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 2 | 5 | 3 | 0  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |

|      |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|
| POST | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|

There was a notable difference between the results before and after the Project training. The pre-survey responses indicated that participants did not have a strong belief in the responsibility of the church in addressing the family violence problem. For the post-survey, however, the results shifted to the positive side—indicated in the “strongly agree” category—that there was a strong change in the belief that the church does have some responsibility in addressing the family violence issue.

Item #2. Family Violence is a social crisis that exists within the community.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 2 | 7 | 1 | 0  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 0  | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0  |

For the pre-survey, the results show participants’ lack of awareness of a local family violence problem. For the post-survey, the results indicated only a slight increase in awareness of a local problem with Family Violence.

Item #3. Family Violence can take place within Christian families.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 0 | 3 | 5 | 2  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 0  | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0  |

At the beginning of the project, results on this item indicated that participants had a low level of awareness of or unwillingness to reveal awareness of Family Violence problems among church members. There was clear movement from the negative to the positive side. The post-survey indicated an important change in awareness from the position of disagreeing to agree with the possibility of a problem among church members.

Item #4. The African American Church is currently preaching against Family Violence.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 0  | 1 | 6 | 3 | 0  |

For the pre-survey, this item indicated participants' awareness of efforts to address the problem of Family Violence. The post-survey indicated very little change in expectation for the church to preach directly about the problem of Family Violence.

Item #5. The African American church has intervened in the past to help its people who were facing crises such as Family Violence.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 3  | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0  |

There was a significant difference between the pre-and post-project results. For the pre-survey, results for this item indicated participants' lack of knowledge about the history of church involvement in addressing social crises, in general, or Family Violence, in particular. For the post-survey, results show 9 of the 10 participants indicating an important change in knowledge of church involvement in addressing social issues.

Item #6. An outreach ministry focused on forgiveness can have a positive impact on helping victims of Family Violence.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 1 | 3 | 6 | 0  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 2  | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0  |

The pre-survey results on this item indicated participants did not believe that the concept of forgiveness had much value or power in addressing family violence. After experiencing the training, the post-Project results indicated a strong change in participants' belief that forgiveness can be helpful to victims of Family Violence.

Item #7. Christians should support an outreach ministry that addresses Family Violence.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 2  | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 5  | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0  |

There was a notable change on this item. For the pre-survey, the results indicated that half of the participants were undecided about the responsibility of Christians to support an outreach ministry focused on family violence. By the end of the Project, post-survey results indicated that the sense of responsibility had changed in a positive direction, with half of the participants in the “strongly agree” category.

Item #8. Bible study on forgiveness can help develop a broader understanding of forgiveness.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 6  | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 7  | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0  |

The results on this item indicated that before the Project, participants saw the value of Bible study on the topic of forgiveness in addressing family violence. For the post-survey, there was very little change. Participants still believed that Bible study on the topic of forgiveness would be valuable for victims of Family Violence.

Item #9. An individual can receive healing from Family Violence through more training on forgiveness.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 1 | 5 | 4 | 0  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 3  | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0  |

At the beginning of the project, participants saw very little chance of receiving healing through training on forgiveness, as indicated by results on the negative side of the survey. Results in the undecided and disagree categories show no value of specific training on forgiveness as useful for addressing family violence. At the end of the Project, however, post-survey results indicated a significant change in the value that participants placed on forgiveness training in the healing process for victims of Family Violence. Nine of the 10 participants changed their position to the positive side.

Item #10. Community violence can be reduced through an outreach ministry focused on healing through forgiveness.

| RATINGS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|
| PRE     | 0  | 0 | 4 | 5 | 1  |
|         |    |   |   |   |    |
| POST    | 0  | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0  |

The overall project goal of reducing community violence through an outreach ministry on forgiveness was perceived by participants to be unlikely as indicated in the negative responses to this item on the pre-project survey. After the training, the survey results indicated a notable change (a decrease from 5 to 2 on “disagree” and an increase from 0 to 6 on “agree”) in participants’ belief about the possible impact of a forgiveness outreach ministry for victims of Family Violence.



*Table 2. Pre- and Post-Project Results on the Forgiveness Questionnaire*

The results on this instrument will be presented as the most common response to each item (the theme) and an example of a quote that represents those responses (the evidence statement).

**Direction:** Answer the following question in your own words. You may use extra sheets of paper if necessary.

1. What is the Christian position on forgiveness?

**Pre:** Answers to this question were brief and indicated that Christians are required to forgive. A typical response was that “The Bible says Christians are supposed to forgive others so that we will be forgiven.”

**Post:** After the project, the responses were longer, and examples of specific scriptures experiences and scriptures were given. A representative answer was “Most of my life was spent in the church hearing about forgiveness, but I did not know there were so many examples of forgiveness in different situations until going through this Project.”

2. What is your personal understanding of forgiveness?

**Pre:** The common response and typical statements were short and similar: “I think forgiveness means we do not hold grudges against others.”

**Post:** More details showed better understanding: “Forgiveness means so much more than I thought. Not only do you not hold grudges, but you release the other person from guilt. I also learned that forgiveness would help me just as much as the person I forgive.”

3. Do you think that forgiveness is possible for victims who face Family Violence?

**Pre:** Several participants explained that forgiveness would be almost impossible for such victims. A typical statement was, “No, in cases of Family Violence.”

Post: Longer explanations were given stating a new understanding of the possibility for forgiveness to the victims. A typical statement was, “That kind of situation would be very, very hard to forgive, but I learned that it is possible and even helpful to forgive in those extreme situations. Also, who knew that there are so many benefits for the person who is doing the forgiving?”

4. How do you define "Family Violence" or violence among family members?

Pre: For the pre-test, this item indicated participants' assumption that family violence is mainly domestic violence. A representative statement was, “Family violence is violence or abuse of a woman by her husband or by a man in her life.”

Post: At the end of the Project, the answers to this question indicated an increase of knowledge that Family Violence is broader than participants previously thought. A representative statement is, “Most of the family violence you hear about (even in the news) is between husband and wife. I don't think I have ever heard anybody say that it involves all members of the family. This idea was eye-opening for me!”

5. What are some of the consequences for children who experience Family Violence?

Pre: For the pre-test, most responses only indicated participants' awareness that children from such homes can become violent. A typical statement was, “When we see violent teenagers, we say they probably come from a violent home.”

Post: After the project, longer responses were given and several specific examples of negative impact on children were given. One typical answer was, “Oh my goodness. I did not know Family Violence could affect children in so many ways. We expect some violence or what we call bad behavior. Adults figure that children don't pay attention to what is going on, so they never think that childhood depression or a drop in grades, or

physical illness can come from a home with family violence going on. We have been so wrong!”

6. In what ways can this church or any local church assist those persons who have experienced and suffered from family violence?

Pre: For the pre-test, this item indicated participants had limited ideas for helping victims of Family Violence. The majority of participants made statements such as “We can encourage them or suggest they go and get counseling.”

Post: At the end of the project training, there were several suggestions for church involvement with victims of Family Violence. One representative response was “We church members can do more than we thought. We can stop judging. We can provide for physical needs. We can use Bible Studies to teach about the benefits of forgiveness to help victims heal. We can have more activities for young people, even anger management. Instead of pretending, we don’t know what is going on, there are many ways we can be more caring.”

### *Table 3: Preaching Response Survey Results*

In addition to the Bible Study Lessons and general information, a sermon was included as part of the training. The subject of the first sermon was “Divine Forgiveness.” One goal of this sermon was to show the value and power of forgiveness at a higher level. Other goals of the sermon were (1) to emphasize the connection between forgiveness and healing, (2) to reinforce the understanding of forgiveness, and (3) to motivate participants to take action. To determine the effectiveness of this sermon,

participants were given a Preaching Response Survey. Their responses were also used to improve the delivery of the final sermons.

**Directions:** Please read each statement carefully and **check** the response or box which describes your personal reaction. Be completely honest in your response as this information is helpful for the speaker.

1. This sermon had a clear idea or main point that I could understand.

|                       |              |           |          |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>80% | Agree<br>20% | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

2. I could easily follow the organization of this sermon.

|                        |       |           |          |                   |
|------------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>100% | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

3. The speaker caught my attention with the thought-provoking illustrations.

|                       |              |                  |          |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>80% | Agree<br>10% | Undecided<br>10% | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|

4. The speaker effectively held my attention.

|                       |              |           |          |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>70% | Agree<br>30% | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

5. This sermon was interesting and easy to listen to.

|                       |              |           |          |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>70% | Agree<br>30% | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

6. I think the speaker properly explained and applied the biblical message.

|                        |       |           |          |                   |
|------------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>100% | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

7. I felt like I knew exactly what I was being called to do through this sermon.

|                       |              |                  |          |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>60% | Agree<br>30% | Undecided<br>10% | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|

8. In my opinion, the speaker proved the point of this message.

|                       |              |           |          |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree<br>70% | Agree<br>30% | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

9. In my judgment, the speaker's concluding remarks were:

|                   |                  |          |      |             |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|------|-------------|
| Impressive<br>70% | Effective<br>30% | Relevant | Weak | Distracting |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|------|-------------|

10. How would you rank this sermon in value to you?

|                  |                   |        |             |           |
|------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| Important<br>80% | Worthwhile<br>20% | Medium | Unimportant | Worthless |
|------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------|-----------|

On all items, the responses were positive which indicates the effectiveness of the message.

*Table 4: Pre- and Post—Project Results on the Forgiveness Short-Answer Survey*

At the end of the project, the knowledge gained regarding forgiveness as valuable in the healing process for victims of Family Violence was measured by a short-answer survey. The results follow.

Directions: Fill in each blank with the correct information regarding “Forgiveness for Healing”.

1. Andrew Park argued that “As the earthly agency of Jesus Christ and God, the church has been identified as the forgiving \_\_\_\_\_.”

For the pre-project survey, this item showed participants' lack of knowledge of Park's overall theme on forgiveness.

|      |                |             |
|------|----------------|-------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 100% | Correct 0%  |
| POST | Incorrect 20%  | Correct 80% |

Post-Project results show evidence of knowledge gain among a significant number of participants.

2. A historical study of the African American church has shown its critical role in the \_\_\_\_\_ of its people.

For the pre-survey, this item showed participants' lack of knowledge of the historical role in liberating its people.

|      |                |              |
|------|----------------|--------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 70 % | Correct 30%  |
| POST | Incorrect 0%   | Correct 100% |

Post-Project results show evidence of knowledge gain among a substantial number of participants.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the Christian model of forgiveness, as the Suffering Servant.

For the pre-survey, this item determined that participants did not identify Jesus as the key model of forgiveness. Several mentioned Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers.

|      |               |              |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 50% | Correct 50%  |
| POST | Incorrect 0%  | Correct 100% |

Post-Project results show evidence of notable gain among half of the participants.

4. Words that Jesus spoke about forgiveness in Luke 6:37: “Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. \_\_\_\_\_ and you will be \_\_\_\_\_.”

For the pre-survey, this item indicated participants’ familiarity with the keywords of Jesus concerning forgiveness before Project presentations.

|      |               |              |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 20% | Correct 80%  |
| POST | Incorrect 0%  | Correct 100% |

Post-Project results show evidence of knowledge gained among was a slight number of participants because most participants were aware of the scripture cited.

5. Name at least two misconceptions of forgiveness:

For the pre-survey, this item indicated a lack of knowledge about misconceptions concerning forgiveness before Project presentations.

|      |               |             |
|------|---------------|-------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 50% | Correct 50% |
| POST | Incorrect 20% | Correct 80% |

Post-Project results show evidence of knowledge gained among a notable number of participants.

6. Two of many long-term consequences of Family Violence are:

For the pre-survey, this item indicated lack of knowledge about the many negative consequences of family violence before Project presentations.

|     |               |             |
|-----|---------------|-------------|
| PRE | Incorrect 70% | Correct 30% |
|-----|---------------|-------------|

|      |              |              |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| POST | Incorrect 0% | Correct 100% |
|------|--------------|--------------|

Post-Project results show evidence of knowledge gained among a substantial number of participants.

7. According to Robert Enright, the process of forgiving includes four phases:

On the pre-survey, this item showed that participants were unfamiliar with the work of a key figure in the area of Forgiveness before Project presentations.

|      |                |             |
|------|----------------|-------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 100% | Correct 0%  |
| POST | Incorrect 20%  | Correct 80% |

Post-Project results show evidence of the knowledge gained among a significant number of participants.

8. Forgiving others means “letting go of resentment, bitterness, hatred, \_\_\_\_\_ and even thoughts of revenge so that we can experience the joy of our salvation.”

On the pre-survey, this item showed a lack of knowledge about one of the key scriptures concerning forgiveness before Project presentations were made.

|      |               |              |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 40% | Correct 60%  |
| POST | Incorrect 0%  | Correct 100% |

Post-Project results show evidence of a gain in knowledge among a substantial number of participants.

9. Three of many benefits of forgiveness in connection to family violence are:



For the pre-survey, this item showed that before project lessons were taught, there was a lack of awareness of many benefits of forgiveness.

|      |               |              |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 70% | Correct 30%  |
| POST | Incorrect 0%  | Correct 100% |

Post-Project results show evidence of knowledge gained among a significant number of participants.

10. The importance of forgiveness is summarized in a quote by Bishop Desmond Tutu, “Without forgiveness, there is no \_\_\_\_\_.

|      |                |             |
|------|----------------|-------------|
| PRE  | Incorrect 100% | Correct 0%  |
| POST | Incorrect 20%  | Correct 80% |

Pre-Project results indicate that participants were unaware of Bishop Tutu’s position or belief about the importance of forgiveness.

Post-Project results show evidence of increased awareness among a significant number of participants.

### *Conclusion*

The theme for this project was “A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process for Victims of Family Violence.” The specific hypothesis was, “If participants receive training about and practice the principles of forgiveness, then they will possess information and methodologies to minimize and/or eliminate the chances of violence occurring between family members.”

In conclusion, the difference between the project results showed achievement of the hypothesis and evidence of transformation. There were notable changes that included (1) a shift from negative to positive beliefs about the role of the church in addressing Family Violence; (2) increased knowledge of the nature and consequences of Family Violence; (3) deeper understanding of forgiveness and (4) increased value of an outreach ministry to address Family Violence.

The implementation of this project was a great experience, however, there is nothing like in-person human fellowship. We all agreed that God was doing a new thing with his people. The lessons were well received, and the participants expressed a strong desire to seek an outreach ministry that supports and helps victims of Family Violence.

Further, I believe that this project can be replicated. Any church that seeks to develop this ministry model will discover the need to help and support victims of Family Violence. The research in this thesis reveals that Family Violence is a social issue that is often not addressed. Moreover, because the family unit is so important for human development, Family Violence must be seriously addressed.

If any church seeks to impact the cycle of violence found in many communities, I offer this model as a beginning. Through biblical teaching and preaching on the principle of forgiveness is a beginning. In a ministry that is seeking to impact violence and support the spiritual and mental welfare of God's people, Family Violence must be addressed. Moreover, it must address the issues of domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault to help in the healing process of its victims.

In a larger sense, a vision of developing a community resource center to provide additional help and support for Family Violence victims can be proposed.

To this end, a committee could be formed to develop a non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation.

This non-profit would act as a separate corporation independent of the church. The purpose would be to partner with community professionals, psychologists, social workers, and legal advisors to offer the resources for victims of Family Violence to live a better life. To God be the glory!

**APPENDIX A**

**HUMAN INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

This form is used to provide information to the research participant (or parent/guardian) and to document written informed consent, minor assent, and/or parental permission.

Student Researcher(s): Lee Johnson, Sr.

**Title of Project:** A Model of Forgiveness Needed in the Healing Process for victims of Family Violence.

I am asking for your voluntary participation in this Doctoral Ministry project.

Please read the following information about the project. If you would like to participate, please sign in the appropriate area below.

**Purpose of the project:** The purpose of the project is to evaluate the need for an outreach ministry serving victims of Family Violence.

**If you participate, you will be asked to** complete survey questions that will be used to help evaluate the need for an outreach ministry.

**Time required for participation:** The time to complete the survey for this project should take ten minutes for each survey. There will be only three surveys, pre-and post-questions a short answer questions sheets for this project.

**Potential Risks of Study:** This study does not have any potential risk factors. You will not be required to display any identifiable data on the survey sheet. Your name is not being required.

**Benefits:** The benefits of this project will provide valuable information and biblical teachings on the principle of forgiveness. This knowledge will inform you of positive ways to address Family Violence using the Christian principle of forgiveness.

**How confidentiality will be maintained:** Confidentiality has the highest regard as you participate in the study.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact:

Adult Sponsor/QS/DS: Lee Johnson, Sr. Phone/email: 248-872-3054  
ljohnson1@united.edu

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question.

By signing this form, I am attesting that I have read and understood the information above, and I freely give my consent/assent to participate.

Adult Informed Consent Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Participant Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B**

### **PRE-AND POST-PROJECT FORGIVENESS SURVEY**

**“A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS NEEDED IN THE HEALING PROCESS  
FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE”**

Lee Johnson, Sr. Facilitator

**Pre-and Post-Project Forgiveness Survey**

Directions: Using the scale below, place the number that matches your beliefs or thoughts in the blank space on the left of each item.

| <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Undecided</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>5</b>              | <b>4</b>     | <b>3</b>         | <b>2</b>        | <b>1</b>                 |

- \_\_\_\_ 1. The church should play a role in helping victims of Family Violence.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Family Violence is a social crisis that exists within the community.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Family Violence can take place within Christian families.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. The African American Church is currently preaching against Family Violence.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. The African American church has intervened in the past to help its people who were facing crises such as Family Violence.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. An outreach ministry focused on forgiveness can have a positive impact on helping victims of Family Violence.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. Christians should support an outreach ministry that addresses Family Violence.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. Bible study on forgiveness can help develop a broader understanding of forgiveness.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. An individual can receive healing from Family Violence through more training on forgiveness.
- \_\_\_\_ 10. Community violence can be reduced through an outreach ministry focused on healing through forgiveness.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **PRE-AND POST-PROJECT FORGIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**“A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS NEEDED IN THE HEALING PROCESS  
FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE”**

Lee Johnson, Sr. Facilitator

Pre and Post Project Forgiveness Questionnaire

Directions: Answer the following question in your own words. You may use extra sheets of paper if necessary.

1. What is the Christian position on forgiveness?

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2. What is your personal understanding of forgiveness?

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3. Do you think that forgiveness is possible in cases of Family Violence?

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4. How do you define "Family Violence" or violence among family members?

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5. What are some of the consequences for children who experience Family Violence?

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6. In what ways can this church or any local church assist those persons who have experienced and suffered from Family Violence?

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **PRE-AND POST-PROJECT FORGIVENESS SHORT-ANSWER SURVEY**

**“A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS NEEDED IN THE HEALING PROCESS  
FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE”**

Lee Johnson, Sr. Facilitator

**Pre- and Post-Project Forgiveness Short-Answer Survey**

The following questions are for your input regarding what you already know or what you want to learn about “forgiveness” for the healing process.

1. Andrew Park argued that “As the earthly agency of Jesus Christ and God, the church has been identified as the forgiving \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. A historical study of the African American church has shown its critical role in the \_\_\_\_\_ of its people.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the Christian model of forgiveness, as the Suffering Servant.
4. Words that Jesus spoke about forgiveness in Luke 6:37: “Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. \_\_\_\_\_ and you will be \_\_\_\_\_.”
5. Name at least two misconceptions of forgiveness are:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Two of many long-term consequences of Family Violence are:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. According to Robert Enright, the process of forgiving includes four phases:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Forgiving others means “letting go of resentment, bitterness, hatred, \_\_\_\_\_ and even thoughts of revenge so that we can experience the joy of our salvation.”
9. Name three benefits of forgiveness:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. The importance of forgiveness is summarized in a quote by Bishop Desmond Tutu, "Without forgiveness, there is no \_\_\_\_\_."

**APPENDIX E**  
**PREACHING RESPONSE SURVEY**

**“A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS NEEDED IN THE HEALING PROCESS  
FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE”**

Lee Johnson, Sr. Facilitator

**Forgiveness Preaching Response Survey**

**Directions:** Please read each statement carefully and check the response or box which describes your personal reaction. Be completely honest in your response in order for the information to be helpful for the speaker.

1. This sermon had a clear idea or main point that I could understand.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

2. I could easily follow the organization of this sermon.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

3. The speaker caught my attention with the thought-provoking illustrations.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

4. The speaker effectively held my attention.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

5. This sermon was interesting and easy to listen to.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

6. I think the speaker properly explained and applied the biblical message.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

7. I felt like I knew exactly what I was being called to do through this sermon.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

8. In my opinion, the speaker proved the point of this message.

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|



9. In my judgment, the speaker's concluding remarks were:

|            |           |          |      |             |
|------------|-----------|----------|------|-------------|
| Impressive | Effective | Relevant | Weak | Distracting |
|------------|-----------|----------|------|-------------|

10. How would you rank this sermon in value to you?

|           |            |        |  |             |           |
|-----------|------------|--------|--|-------------|-----------|
| Important | Worthwhile | Medium |  | Unimportant | Worthless |
|-----------|------------|--------|--|-------------|-----------|

APPENDIX F  
SAMPLE SERMON

## Divine Forgiveness

Proposition: That the listener will experience a change of heart once there is recognition of the forgiving love of God and his desire to have a relationship with us.

Text: Genesis (9:9) I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood: never again will there be a flood: never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.<sup>1</sup>

Then God spoke to Noah and his sons: I'm setting up my covenant with you including your children who will come after you, along with everything alive around you birds, farm animals, wild animals that came out of the ship with you. I'm setting up my covenant with you that never again will a flood destroy the Earth.<sup>2</sup> (Message Bible)

God told Noah to build a big boat, called an *ark*, and He told Noah exactly how to do it. The ark was to be 450 ft. (137 m) long, 75 ft. (23 m) wide and 45 ft. (14 m) high. It was to have three decks, be divided into rooms, and have a door in the side.

Noah was to find one male and one female of every kind of animal and bird and take them into the ark. He also had to take food for all those animals. It took Noah 120 years to build. God told Noah to build a big boat, called an *ark*, and He told Noah exactly how to do it. The ark was to be 450 ft. (137 m) long, 75 ft. (23 m) wide and 45 ft. (14 m) high. It was to have three decks, be divided into rooms, and have a door in the side. Noah was 600 years old by the time everything was ready. God told Noah to go into the ark with his wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives Then it started to rain. It rained without stopping for forty days and nights! The water got so deep that even the

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 9:9 (NIV)

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 9:9, Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, (NavPress: Colorado Springs, CO.) 2005.

mountains were covered. Every living creature on earth died in the flood. But the ark floated on top of the floodwaters and the people and animals in the ark were safe.

Eventually, the water started to go down again, and the ark came to rest in the mountains of Ararat. After being on the ark for about 11 months, Noah sent out a dove to see if it would find land, but it found no place to rest and returned to the ark. Seven days later, Noah sent the dove out again. This time it flew back carrying an olive leaf, and Noah knew it had found land. After about seven months God said to Noah, Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives.

The book of Genesis is literary evidence of being a marvelously blended composition of several ancient sources according to some scholars. However, Jewish tradition says Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible it's uncertain when genesis was written It covers a time from the birds of creation to the death of Joseph in Egypt about 1800 BC some Bible scholars Further, if Moses wrote the book, he probably did it during the 40 years he wandered in the Sinai Peninsula after leaving Egypt when this long journey took place some scholars say the exodus as it is called happened in four in about 1400 BC.

We Christians believe that the book was written to show that God's creation was good, but mankind became spoiled by sin God began his plan to reclamation. The biblical sites and scenes of the book cover some 1000 miles, stretched from Abraham's hometown of UR in Iraq to the land God promised him in Canaan (Israel) and to Egypt, Africa.

In Genesis there is a garden called Eden, biblical scholar, The late Rev. Dr. Cain Hope Felder who stood in this pulpit informed us in his introduction of the Original African Heritage Bible this garden was planted in Eastwood in northeastern Africa between the Tigris and the Euphrates meaning that the whole region of which this garden

was only a part was called Eden which translated from Hebrew means pleasure or delight, in other words, paradise it stands to reason that if the region from which the biblical garden of Eden extends was known then as North-East Africa. Africa is the cradle of civilization. Eden land of pleasure and delight was a place of special joy for its creator. In this delightful place, God placed humankind. It was in Northeast Africa a fertile strip of land.<sup>3</sup>

Today I have chosen the story of a man named Noah a righteous man. A man of good character the grandson Methuselah. The story reveals to me a God who has gotten fed up, tired, and grieved with pain in his heart. The sinfulness of mankind filled with violence, bloodshed disobedience, and rebellious to his will. God had given up on mankind.

He has given them free will and allowed them to make their own decisions. What is depicted in the book is that if you were to start at Genesis 6 you will discover very clearly that God got tired of mankind, and God was grieved. God's heart had been broken because of violence, bloodshed, and corruption.

Beloved, sin had become so devastating we discover in Chapter six. God saw the wickedness and it was great in the earth. Not only that their imagination was corrupt, but their thoughts were also wicked Their hearts were only evil. Genesis six says and it repented the Lord that he had made man. It grieved him in his heart, sinful corruption, wickedness, and violence grieves the heart of God. He was not pleased Genesis 6:7 He decided to wipe them out.

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<sup>3</sup> Cain Hope Felder, *The Original African Heritage Study Bible*, (World Bible Publishers, Inc.: Iowa Falls, Iowa) 1993, xi.

Nonetheless, in Genesis 9:9 God decided that he was going to establish a covenant with Noah and promised never again that he will allow life to be cut off by the waters of a flood never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. Alexander Maclaren says,

The idea of a covenant is in terms usually implies a reciprocal bond both parties to which come under obligation by it each to the other but in this case, there are no obligations on the part of man or the creatures this covenant it's God only it is contingent on nothing done by the recipient he binds himself whatever be the conduct of men in this covenant it is the self-motivated promise of an unconditional mercy.<sup>4</sup>

My friends, God uses his Divine prerogative and shows again favor to Noah who had walked with him consistently before the floodwaters came.

I see Divine Forgiveness in this established covenant because of mercy. In this story, we can find mercy and grace. Mercy because God did not wipe out the whole human race. And grace because Noah received the favor of God. I believe if we look close enough, divine forgiveness shows up. The redeeming love of God shows up. It's found when we realize how much God wanted a relationship with his creation. Divine forgiveness is motivated by Divine love. God could have wiped all of creation out, but he found a righteous man named Noah. A man who walked with him. A man who had a strong relationship with him. Beloved God values his relationship with his created beings. God wants to maintain his relationship with us.

Beloved, the God who stood within time and eternity, spoke spinning worlds into existence, God the everlasting father, God Jehovah-Jireh wants to have a relationship with us. God decided he would establish a covenant with Noah to maintain his

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture, (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI) Vol (1), 62.

relationship with this righteous man, this man who walked with him. He valued the relationship.

Noah, I have a reclamation plan. Despite all that God had done and all that God was doing to develop a relationship with man, he still fell. My friends, his fallen angel Nephilim was the satanic force behind all this violence, bloodshed, and wickedness that grieved the heart of God. It created sorrow in the heart of God, therefore he repented that he had even made mankind.

Beloved mercy comes to Noah. He decided he would give his mercy, and render Divine Forgiveness, he let the grief and pain go. He let the past hurt go. He established a covenant with Noah. He started fresh with a forgiving heart. He began the repopling of the world with a righteous man and one who walked with him. Noah was the man that he chose because of his righteousness and his devotion to Almighty God. The scripture says, that Noah walked with God. Noah and God had a relationship. God is always trying to walk and talk with us to have a relationship with us.

Today I lift Divine forgiveness. God wanted to start all over again and begin a whole new creation, wipe out the past. He decided to create a new order. God has a loving heart; he is compassionate, he is concerned about us. He could have wipe wiped everybody out but because he has a forgiving heart, he let the sinful past go. He creates a new order with a forgiving heart. He let go and established a new covenant.

We must recognize Divine forgiveness when we see it. That is what he is offering us today. He trying to show us that forgiveness has value. When looking close enough we can see Divine Forgiveness. Look at it, despite who we are, despite what we do, God is

still trying to have a relationship with us. He does not want to render his wrath upon us. He told Noah I'm not going to use water again that won't happen.

My friends, I wonder what God will do next in this world to get us right. There is still corruption in high and low places, there is still wickedness. The daily news reports the wickedness and corruption in our government. There is violence and bloodshed in our streets and our schools. Violence in communities all across the landscape of this country. There is police violence, street violence, and family violence.

Maybe God is trying to get our attention in this pandemic era. Oh God, have mercy on us. Maybe he is getting grieved again. Maybe his heart is hurting again because of the corruption and wickedness of this world today. Maybe he decided to shut down the world by bringing this devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

Look at, we are now isolated in our homes; the doors of some churches are still closed. We often say the doors of the church are open, but God closed the doors of the churches. Maybe he trying to tell us something in this era. Maybe is he trying to speak to us in the sense of a new order? Maybe he's trying to strengthen our relationship with him so I'm looking at Divine Forgiveness hoping that we receive his favor. Maybe he is going to give us another chance to get right. Pray for Divine forgiveness perhaps he will give us the desires of our hearts. Divine Forgiveness is God forgiving us. In this text, I see a great possibility for us to come out of this era of chaos and confusion. Maybe God is trying to establish a new covenant, a new order.

God told Noah I am going to establish a covenant with you. Yes, I had to get rid of some folk, Yes, I had to get rid of my fallen angels, I had to get rid of them. They had corrupted my creation, it grieved my heart, I had to send my wrath and judgment. I do not



appreciate sin and corruption, I do not appreciate violence, I do not appreciate disobedience, I do not appreciate bloodshed. But today I am showing what I did for Noah.

Beloved, we need to reread,

2 Chronicles 7:14, If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive heal their sin and will heal their land.<sup>5</sup>

I got Divine Forgiveness to offer.

I gave you mercy, my Psalmist told you it endures forever.

I gave you grace my unmerited favor, Paul told you that.

I gave my love, John told you that, I so loved that I gave you my only begotten Son.

I want you to recognize today my Divine Forgiveness.

Beloved, I believe if we would recognize and reveal what Divine Forgiveness can do, we would surrender for God today. God is a loving God who is more concerned about loving you than he is destroying you. God is calling us to trust him, to take us out of this pandemic predicament. To take us out of this era and give us a new start.

My friends, I believe that. God is still in charge. Perhaps, when he gets finished with us, he will get our attention, or he will render his judgment and his wrath upon us.

Beloved, we have come into an era and a time where it seems we are no longer believers of a God who rules and super rulers. A God who opens the world to us. God is trying to get our attention, the doors of some churches close. But God will open them again, Oh yes, the people of God will be able to come together in fellowship again,

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV).

but it'll be a new understanding of the divine will of God. God is offering Divine Forgiveness.

My friends, today, I lift Divine Forgiveness because we need to understand that when we realize that Divine Forgiveness offers his conflict resolution plan, his redemptive plan. God did not plan all of this mess we created. This wickedness, corruption, and the violence in our streets God is trying to tell us in this story, he is showing us don't grieve his heart and do not disobey his will. Beloved God get angry God! He cares for his children but at times there must be disciplinary actions for his disobedient children.

But I got to lift Divine Forgiveness because if we understood it, we would realize that there is a loving God who forgives us, he forgives us despite us, he forgives sin. When we realize that we are forgiven there are three things that happened

First, a moral tweaking we make some moral adjustments. Secondly, we have a mental makeover, a mental transformation. Thirdly, it creates a spiritual release of spiritual emancipation. You see we become great witnesses for the Lord. We testify that I've been forgiven. This moral tweaking of our minds or consciousness. Lead us to what's just and what's right. I was going to this, but I've become conscious of the difference between what is true and what is false because we have been forgiven Ask anybody who has been forgiven and understand the value of forgiveness. Beloved, we must become conscious of our forgiveness When we do moral adjustments are made. We think differently. We look at things differently. We even want to be different. Why because we have been forgiven! My friends when you recognize the beauty of our faith in God.

Oh! When you appreciate the beauty of its holiness and hear the truth instead of lies when we see evil for what it is and seek good over evil. We have made some moral adjustments.

But, if we don't!

If don't appreciate the beauty of its holiness, if we don't choose good over evil, I am here to tell you; we will find ourselves with a paralyzed heart. If we don't our hearts are going to remain hardened If we don't our minds will be confused in darkness. If we don't get our hearts right. We going to be paralyzed in darkness. You see, we need to keep on growing in the knowledge of God's forgiving love. We got to keep growing from carnality to spirituality. We need to keep reaching, we need to keep seeking and we need to keep trying to live according to the mandates of God

Paul told us it not it's not easy when I would do good evil is present, it chokes me, it poisoned me, it hindered me it. It caused paralysis in my heart I am in agony.

My friends when you realize the Divine Forgiveness of our sins. There's a deep profound change in our soul because we are being delivered from sins and being set apart by God from the world's pleasures. Our relationship with God is strengthened, we no longer suffer sinful paralysis.

Beloved, there is joy in our souls when we realize what God has done for us. I am not what I use to be, I've been forgiven for my past transgressions. I have unspeakable joy. Simply, when we realize what Divine Forgiveness means in our hearts.

When we realize are set apart now, We understand we are forgiven, we know how to forgive others. I am here to tell you. Our soul gets renewed. Our soul gets revitalized Our soul gets replenished, Our soul gets touched. We are toned into Divine Forgiveness.

We now say like David, I will bless the Lord at all times.

When you recognize you are forgiven, You will say!

I trust in God; I know He cares for me,  
On mountain bleak or on the stormy sea  
Though billows roll, He keeps my soul  
My heavenly Father watches over me<sup>6</sup>

I trust Him

I am set apart

My sins are forgiven

I got a gift.

I got a testimony.

I am humbled by his love. I can't bathe in the polluted waters of arrogant ignorance any longer. I am glad about my forgiveness. Beloved, I'm here to tell you need a sense of gratitude, a sense of joy, a sense of singing in your heart, a Mystic consciousness. A Mystic center is no longer a theory but a fact, I am forgiven.

Yes, It creates a humbling effect upon you when you realize that despite you. You are forgiven. Despite the ugliness of the sin in your life, you are forgiven.

I don't know about you, but I am glad about that. I am glad I am redeemed.

I'm glad about it, I know my sins are forgiven,

However, if you will not admit that then, at least stand in the presence of somebody who has, they will tell their story.

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<sup>6</sup> D.E. King, ed., *The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal*, (Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.: Washington, DC), 1977, 214.

I thank God I am not what I used to be. My sins have been shut up. I'm free, I'm free at last, thanks be to God I'm grateful for what he has done for me.

Yes, I know right from wrong now. You're right, I always did but there was no conviction in my heart, there was no appreciation, there was no real commitment.

There has been a mental transformation, I have had a makeover. My perspective on things has changed. It took a while, but forgiveness changed me, yes it was a progressive process. I had to grow in the grace and the knowledge of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Not only that, but I now know what unmerited favor is and I now have greater knowledge of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I realized that God's grace is sufficient, the knowledge of Christ brought it to me.

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed. Through many dangers, toils, and snares I've already come; 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.<sup>7</sup>

I know I got a witness

Beloved, I've been mentally transformed, I've had a makeover it was progressive. The Lord laid his hands on me. I had to grow. You remember, when Paul wrote his letters from prison in Ephesus, Colossians, and Philippians he is agonizing in prayer on behalf of children in the faith What was he praying for? Not their faith they had that, and he thanks God for that, not their hope they had that, and he rejoiced about that, not their love they had that, and he was glad about that, and he gloried in it that. But he prayed that they might have full knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>7</sup> D.E. King, The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal, 135.

My friends, when you know you have it, it transforms your thinking, you have a new understanding of who God is. You have a new crucify your self-life, and you have a better understanding of other folk's oppression. Although, I have some intellectual understanding of the ontological notions of God. I may have been convinced of his existence and I may think I feared him with some quiet wholesomeness. But when I realize who he is and what Divine Forgiveness is, something happens to me.

My intellectual notions are transformed into an emotional breakthrough. I am fearless in my heart I am wounded by my sins. I got a mental makeover because I know that, that I know that I know I have been forgiven. A transformation has taken place

My Friends when this happens to you. You got a new vision of God. You got a new understanding of his redemptive plan. You got make over, you got mystic consciousness. You magnify the Lord, you become a greater witness for him. He looked beyond my faults and saw my needs. You become a witness; I know that my redeemer lives. You become a witness, I got peace like a river. You become a witness; I feel no way tired, he did not bring me this for to leave me. Is there a witness in the house? I have been transformed, I got a mental makeover, I have experienced a mystic consciousness, I see better, I know better, I look better, I think better. I do better, I am pressing on. I have been forgiven, my relationship with God is line. I see things differently I got a new passion for his Word. I've got a deeper commit, a new devotion.

Finally, beloved, when you recognize and realize you have been forgiven, there ought to be spiritual emancipation, not only a moral adjustment, not only a mental makeover or transformation, but spiritual emancipation takes place.

You see, forgiveness is spiritual emancipation. Yes, when we have been spiritually emancipated. We have a stronger desire to worship God. When you have been forgiven and know it, you got a stronger desire to serve God.

When you have been set free there's, a joyful spirit controlling your life. Not mean, not bitter, not rude but joyful, not disdainful, and fastidious but elated, ecstatic, jubilant, a hallelujah in your soul. when you've been forgiven,

Yes, when you have you've been spiritually emancipated you want to worship and praise the Lord for the great thing he has done. When you have been set apart, there must be the tearing away of the old you, a new life, you got another chance, thank God for another chance to get it right. Remove the veil of darkness, remove the agony, remove the burden you carry, remove the fears you have, remove the unwanted anxiety that's worry you..

Beloved, receive your liberation, accept your spiritual emancipation, you are set apart, you are set free, you are loose for God's divine purpose. You are delivered, free at last, thanks be to God free! Free, to love again with a pure heart! Free to be happy. You see that awareness of Divine Forgiveness can bring you joy. When you understand how far God has gone to save you. When you recognize and realize how much God loves you. When you know how much God cares about you? How much he desires to have a relationship with you.

Beloved, that spiritual release, that deliverance, that liberating power move out of the darkness of our soul and into the light that God has created you. There is something in your heart, there is greater inspiration in you soul, there's something that is deep down inside of you.

It's like a sacred flame of love that goes from heart to heart and breath to breath. The deep darkness in our life has a bright light of liberation, to free love again, the Spirit to praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Beloved, spiritual emancipation means singing in your heart, it is not just worship and praise but a new determination to serve him. We have got our relationship right with Him. When we realize what his divine purpose is we can serve the least, the lost, the bruised, and broken-hearted. There is a wonderful change that has come over you. I am tell you Divine Forgiveness has redeemed us, we are now partners with God on a mission for the Kingdom of God. It is no longer about me, myself, and I. You now are God-centered, you have put away, self-aggrandizement, ego inflation, it's no longer your station, or status in life, it is all about the love of God. Spiritual deliverance takes us to another realm where Christ is Lord, where he is the center of our joy.

Divine Forgiveness helps us look to the Cross at Calvary with a greater focus, it is there we see Divine Forgiveness. We see clearer how far God went to save us and to save the world in which we live. The most well-known scripture is John: 3:16 that speaks to us clearly what Divine Forgiveness was all about. God so loves the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

That was Divine Forgiveness in action. Our debt was paid at the Cross, Jesus paid it all sin had left a crimson stain, but He washed it white as snow. At the Cross, I saw Divine Forgiveness. I am forgiven, I am delivered, I am liberated  
At the Cross, I got my freedom. At the Cross, I got pardoned. At the Cross, I got liberated.



At the Cross, Christ died for me. At the Cross where a passionate Christ prays to a passionate God for the forgiveness of an undeserving crowd.

Beloved, I see Divine Forgiveness at the Cross. Beloved Christ died for our liberation from sin and shame. Beloved Christ died so we could have the relationship God wanted for his creation. He died for you and me

Yes! He died so we could see forgiveness at the heart of God. Died to show us the value of forgiveness. Died so we could learn to model him and love one another. Died so we can forgive one another. Died on an old, rugged Cross, beaten, bruised, and wounded for you and me. Died!

Was it for crimes that I had done,  
He groaned upon the tree.  
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree!  
Well might the sun in darkness hide  
And shut his glories in  
When Christ, the mighty Maker died,  
For man the creature's sin.<sup>8</sup>

Because he died, we have a lively hope. Because he died. We have an imperishable hope. Died because of Divine Forgiveness. Died cruelly, murdered, and passed through the darkness of the sun that frantic frenetic Friday for you and me. I thank Him for showing me Divine Forgiveness. I made my moral tweaking, I've made my a moral adjustment, I've made my mental makeover, I have been transformed, I have been spiritually liberated, delivered, set apart, set free. Have you?

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<sup>8</sup> D. E. King, *The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal*, 79.

Thanks be to God, Glory Hallelujah that Divine Forgiveness stepped in and rescued a sinful world. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Christ Jesus, Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying from me I'm free at last.

Jesus Paid It All!

I hear the Savior say, thy strength indeed is small! Child of weakness, watch and pray.

Fine in Me thine All in all.

Chorus: Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe, Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> D. E. King, *The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal*, 89.

APPENDIX G

LESSON OUTLINE

TYPES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

I. Domestic Violence, Violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner.

A. Understanding Domestic Violence

1. domestic violence occurs when there is an imbalance of power in the relationship—
2. when one partner uses physical violence as well as tactics like
  - a. emotional abuse,
  - b. verbal abuse,
  - c. financial abuse to maintain control.

3. It's also important to remember that the person being victimized did not cause the abuse. Abuse is always a choice made by the abuser. The reasons behind the choice to abuse another person are often complicated. Some people abuse others due to jealousy, low self-esteem, or poor impulse control. Other people have a personality disorder or a mental health issue that causes them to be violent and controlling. And still, others use abusive and controlling tactics because they witnessed these types of behaviors growing up.

4. NATIONAL STATISTICS

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. ...
- 1 in 7 women and 1 in 25 men have been injured by an intimate partner. ...
- 1 in 10 women has been raped by an intimate partner.

In the United States, an estimated 10 million people experience domestic violence every year. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, about 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner. About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, sexual violence, and/or partner stalking with injury, PTSD, contraction of STDS, etc.

B. Domestic Violence Facts Washington D.C.

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- 1. Research indicates that 1 out of 4 women will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives, which means that there may be approximately 75,000 domestic violence victims in the District. •
- 2. One-fourth of the District's female population is likely to experience domestic violence at some point in their lives. This figure is approximately 60% higher than the number of reported domestic-related calls to the Metropolitan Police Department in 2006. • I

3. In the District, where victim-offender relationships could be established from 2002 to 2004, the Metropolitan Police Department (MDP) reported that there were 51 murders attributed to domestic/family violence: on average, one homicide victim every two weeks. •
4. In 2006, the MPD received over 29,000 domestic-related crime calls: one every 19 minutes. In 2007, the number of domestic-related crime calls increased to over 31,000—one call every 17 minutes. •
5. Teens in the District experience dating violence at one of the highest rates in the nation.
6. **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS MOST OFTEN A CRIME AGAINST WOMEN.** • Although men are more likely to be victims of violent crime overall, a recent study by the U.S. Department of Justice reports that "intimate partner violence is primarily a crime against women." • Of those victimized by an intimate partner, 85% are women and 15% are men.<sup>2</sup> In other words, women are 5 to 8 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner. • The vast majority of domestic assaults are committed by men. Even when men are victimized, 10% are assaulted by another man. In contrast, only 2% of women who are victimized are assaulted by another woman.
7. **ALTHOUGH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFFECTS ALL WOMEN, NOT ALL WOMEN EXPERIENCE THE SAME RATE OF ABUSE.** • Women aged 16 to 24 are most likely to be victimized by an intimate partner. • African American women experience more domestic violence than White women in the age group of 20-24. However, Black and White women experience the same level of victimization in all other age categories. • Hispanic women are less likely to be victimized than non-Hispanic women in every age group. • Women are most vulnerable to violence when separated from their intimate partners. The second most vulnerable group is those who are divorced. This can discourage women from leaving their abusive partner, out of fear that it will increase their risk of victimization.
8. **PHYSICAL INJURY OFTEN RESULTS FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND IS LARGELY UNREPORTED.** • Approximately 40-50% of female victims are physically injured when assaulted by their intimate partner, accounting for over 200,000 visits to the hospital emergency room each year. • Only about 1 in 5 of domestic violence victims with physical injuries seek professional medical treatment. **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS UNDER-REPORTED TO THE POLICE.** • Only about half of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police. African American women are more likely than others to report their victimization to the police. • The most common reasons for not reporting domestic violence to the police are that victims view the incident as a personal or private matter, they fear retaliation from their abuser, and they do not believe that police will do anything about the incident. • Even with this dramatic under-reporting, domestic violence calls constitute approximately half of all violent crime calls to police departments. For example, 49% of the violent crime calls received by the DC Metropolitan Police Department in 2000 were for domestic violence incidents.
9. **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MURDERS HAPPEN MOST OFTEN TO WOMEN.** • Women are far more likely than men to be murdered by an intimate partner. Of

those murdered by their intimate partner, 74% are women and 26% are men. In other words, nearly 3 out of 4 of the murders committed by intimate partners have a female victim.

#### 10. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHERE BOTH PARTNERS ARE ABUSIVE HURTS MEN AS MUCH AS IT HURTS WOMEN (The Myth of "Mutuality"). •

Although many studies reports that men and women use physical violence at equal rates within intimate relationships, this fails to take into account the nature of the violence and the level of fear and injury experienced by each party. •

Several studies document that women experience higher levels of fear than men in domestic violence situations. This is perhaps because women in domestic violence situations are much more likely to be injured and injured severely than men are. [

Sources: See the Feminist Majority Foundation fact sheet:

<http://feminist.org/other/dv/dvfact.html>

Sources: Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence, (2000).

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## II. Child Abuse

### A. Child maltreatment hurts children, families, and communities.

1. There are *four categories of abuse*: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect
2. Children *under age 1* are at the greatest risk of abuse
3. *More than 700,000 children* were victims of child abuse and neglect in 2014
4. Children in America die every day from child abuse and neglect
5. Child abuse can impact brain development and has *life-long impacts* on health and mental health
6. Child maltreatment has *staggering economic costs* - the CDC estimates just 1 year of confirmed cases creates approximately \$124 billion in lifetime total costs
7. Child abuse *can be prevented* - family and community supports can prevent abuse, lessen the impact of abuse, and stop abuse from happening again.

## B. Facts About Abuse

1. In the United States, 1 in 10 boys and girls will be sexually abused before they are 18.
2. Every 11 seconds a child is reported abused or neglected in the United States.
3. 13,700 children are abused each day in the United States.
4. Four of these children die each day as a result of abuse and/or neglect.
5. More than 80% of abused children are abused by their parents.
6. During the 2016-17 fiscal year, according to the Department of Social Services: **6,947** founded [proven] cases of child abuse and/or neglect in Virginia.
7. **38** children died as a result of abuse and/or neglect in Virginia.
8. There were **1,543** reports of substance-exposed newborns.
9. **650** children were in founded cases of abuse and/or neglect in the \*Greater Richmond and Central VA area.
10. **38,515** children were in possible cases of abuse/neglect and referred to intervention services such as SCAN.
11. **57** percent of maltreated children experienced physical neglect.
12. **28** percent of maltreated children were victims of physical abuse.
13. **9** percent of maltreated children were victims of sexual abuse.

Source: <https://nationalchildabusecoalition.org/what-is-child-abuse>

## III. Sexual Assault

A. **Sexual assault** covers a wide range of unwanted behaviors—including penetration—that is attempted or completed against a victim's will or when a victim cannot consent because of age, disability, or the influence of alcohol or drugs. Sexual assault may involve actual or threatened physical force, use of weapons, coercion, intimidation, or pressure and may include—

- Intentional touching of the victim's genitals, anus, groin, or breasts.
- Voyeurism. Sexual pleasure from watching others in the nude
- Exposure to exhibitionism.
- Undesired exposure to pornography.
- Public display of images that were taken in a private context or when the victim was unaware.

A. **Rape** definitions vary by state and in response to legislative advocacy. Most statutes currently define rape as non-consensual oral, anal, or vaginal penetration of the victim by body parts or objects using force, threats of bodily harm, or by taking advantage of a victim who is incapacitated or otherwise incapable of giving consent. Incapacitation may include mental or cognitive disability, self-induced or forced intoxication, status as minor, or any other condition defined by law that voids an individual's ability to give consent.

Not surprisingly, rates of rape also vary widely among studies according to how the crime is defined, what population is studied, and what methodology is used. Estimates range from as low as 2 percent [3], as quoted in *The Epidemic of Rape and Child Sexual Abuse in the United States* [4], to 56 percent [5]. The most recent and methodologically rigorous studies show that sexual assault still occurs at rates that approximate those first identified more than 20 years ago when Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski [6] found that approximately 27.5% of college women reported experiences that met the legal criteria for rape.

Sexual assault and rape are generally defined as felonies. During the past 30 years, states have enacted rape shield laws to protect victims and criminal and civil legal remedies to punish those who commit this crime. The effectiveness of these laws in accomplishing their goals is a topic of concern.

Estimates also vary regarding how likely a victim is to report victimization. Traditionally, rape notification rates differed depending on whether the victim knew the person who committed the crime — those who knew the person was often less likely to report the crime. This gap, however, may be closing.

## Notes

[note 1] Hill, C., and E. Silva. *Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus*. Washington, DC: American Association of University Women, 2006.

[note 2] Rubin, P, 1995. *Civil Rights and Criminal Justice: Primer on Sexual Harassment*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, October 1995, NCJ 156663.

[note 3] Gordon, T., and S. Riger. *Female Fear*. New York: Free Press, 1989, NCJ 118492.

[note 4] Russell, D.E.H., and R.M. Bolen. *The Epidemic of Rape and Child Sexual Abuse in the United States*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000: 247.

[note 5] Goodman, L.A. "Prevalence of Abuse Among Homeless and Housed Poor Mothers: A Comparison Study." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 61(4)(October 1991): 489–500.

[note 6] Koss, M.P., C.A. Gidycz, and N. Wisiewski. "The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of Higher Education Students." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 55(2)(1987): 162–170, NCJ 108037.



## APPENDIX H

### LESSON OUTLINE

#### THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

## I. Psychological Trauma

A. People who have experienced trauma, such as violence, abuse, a serious injury, or a natural disaster, are at risk for developing a condition called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD impacts how a person's brain functions.

There are three specific areas of the brain that are impacted by traumatic events. The first is called the **amygdala**. The amygdala's job is to help control emotions, survival instincts, and memory. This is the area of the brain responsible for our "fight or flight" response. For someone who has experienced trauma, the amygdala can become hyperactive, making the person intensely aware of everything around them. This is the brain's way of making sure that the person can get away from people, places, or events that might cause them harm. This can make it very difficult for someone to relax, sleep or find joy in activities outside of their "comfort zone."

The second area of the brain that is impacted is called the **hippocampus**. This area of the brain aids in learning and memory. Studies have shown that people who have experienced traumatic events may have a smaller hippocampus than those who haven't. Research has shown that this may be due to hormones that are released when someone experiences frequent, high levels of stress. Prolonged exposure to these hormones can damage or destroy cells in the hippocampus. People with PTSD may have a hard time forming memories but may have vivid memories of the trauma they have experienced. Situations that remind people of their trauma can cause feelings of extreme panic and fear.

The third area of the brain that is impacted is called **the prefrontal cortex**. This part of the brain is responsible for regulating emotions. The prefrontal cortex helps to control the activity of the amygdala. For people who have not experienced significant trauma, their prefrontal cortex will signal to the amygdala that certain situations or people are safe. This will calm down the "fight or flight" response. However, in people who have experienced trauma, the prefrontal cortex will have a hard time regulating fear and other emotions. This can lead to frequent feelings of panic and anxiety as well as dysfunctional reactions to situations that are not harmful.

So, what does this all mean? For people who have experienced trauma, their brains have developed a way to help keep them safe. They become hyper-aware of their surroundings and feelings of fear often keep them from situations they perceive as dangerous. Unfortunately, this also means that people with PTSD may experience frequent fatigue, restlessness, fear, and miss out on enjoyable activities. The good news? These changes in the brain are not permanent! There are different types of therapies that have been shown to help people overcome the impact PTSD has had on their life. Desensitization Therapy and Trauma-Focused

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) are just two types of treatments that are successful in helping to combat symptoms of PTSD.

Certain medications have also been shown to be helpful for people who have experienced trauma. If you or someone you know has experienced trauma, please reach out for assistance. Your primary doctor or care coordinator can be a great source of information and can help refer you to someone who can help. You can find joy and peace again!

Written by Jennifer Parks, LMSW, the Clinical Assessment Specialist at the Arc of Monroe's Article 16 Clinic.

## **1. II. Criminal Justice System**

**A.** The processes through which child abuse leads to subsequent antisocial and criminal behavior are not well understood. New findings from NIJ-funded research conducted by Dr. Herrenkohl and colleagues help to address this gap in knowledge by identifying factors that explain the link between child maltreatment and adulthood criminal behavior. Participants were drawn from the Lehigh Longitudinal Study, one of the longest-running national studies examining the long-term effects of child abuse and neglect. Beginning in the 1970s, the study has tracked approximately 450 children from preschool to adulthood. Reports of child abuse from Child Protective Services records and parental reports of abusive parenting were collected when the children were 18 months to 6 years of age and linked to self-reported criminal involvement three decades later. Antisocial behavior also was measured in the intervening years during middle childhood and adolescence.

Results showed that childhood abuse increased the risk of adulthood crime by promoting antisocial behavior during childhood and adolescence, followed by the formation of relationships with antisocial romantic partners and peers in adulthood.

The researchers also found gender differences in the pathways linking child abuse and adult crime. Although affiliations with antisocial peers in adulthood increased criminal involvement for both men and women with histories of childhood physical and emotional abuse, the role of adult romantic partners in the link between child abuse and adult crime varied between men and women.

Among men, a warm and caring romantic relationship in adulthood decreased criminal behavior by reducing men's affiliations with antisocial peers. This protective pathway was not, however, observed among women — a warm relationship in adulthood did not decrease their criminal behavior or affiliation with antisocial peers.

Among women, having an antisocial romantic partner was linked to affiliations with antisocial peers, which in turn increased criminal involvement. For men,

having an antisocial partner was associated with less partner warmth, which in turn predicted an affiliation with antisocial peers, itself a proximal predictor of adult crime. Relationships with antisocial peers and romantic partners in adulthood may increase criminal involvement by normalizing crime and reinforcing coping skills that promote criminal behavior among both men and women.

Additional findings from a subset of participants with histories of childhood physical and emotional abuse further showed that female participants were more likely to exhibit internalizing problems such as depression, social withdrawal, and anxiety during middle childhood, which in turn increased the risk of adult crime. In contrast, male participants were more likely to exhibit externalizing behavioral problems, such as aggression, hostility, and delinquency during middle childhood, which subsequently led to adult criminal behavior.

The researchers also found evidence of a “cycle of violence” among individuals with child maltreatment histories. This pattern of behavior occurs when victims of childhood violence perpetrate violence toward their peers or partners later in the life cycle. In Herrenkohl and colleagues’ research, individuals with substantiated child maltreatment histories were more likely to perpetrate sexual and physical intimate partner violence in adulthood compared to their non-maltreated peers. The research did not examine the processes through which child maltreatment leads to violence perpetration in adulthood.

Overall Herrenkohl and colleagues’ findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing the negative consequences of child abuse on adult criminal behavior should be tailored to the developmental timing of the antisocial behavior. In particular, antisocial behavior that begins during childhood and adolescence should be targeted directly to disrupt the persistence of antisocial behavior into adulthood, with an emphasis on reducing internalizing problems for female adolescents. In contrast, interventions with adults should focus on relationships with antisocial peers and romantic partners to reduce the normalization of criminal behavior. Tailoring intervention efforts to address different factors in the pathways linking child abuse and adult crime may more effectively promote distance from antisocial behavior associated with childhood abuse.

### **III. Dysfunctionality**

A. The McGraw-Hill Concise Dictionary of Modern Medicine defines the term ‘dysfunctional family’ as “a family with multiple ‘internal’ conflicts, e.g. sibling rivalries, parent-child conflicts, domestic violence, mental illness, single parenthood, or ‘external’ conflicts, e.g. alcohol or drug abuse, extramarital affairs, gambling, unemployment-influences that affect the basic needs of the family unit.” The main thing to remember about this definition is that there are multiple negative influences, and they affect basic needs. This is what separates families with minor dysfunction from those where family dysfunction is a serious problem.

### **Family History of Dysfunction**

People tend to learn their parenting styles from their parents or other caregivers. If their parents abused them, they may abuse their children. Or, they may go overboard the other direction, being unnecessarily lenient. They may manipulate each other and their children as their parents did. They may not truly understand how to teach their children in healthy ways.

The good news for people who grew up in dysfunctional families is that they can learn better ways of parenting. They can deal with the issues they still carry as adults and learn how to love, appreciate, respect, and deal with each other in a less emotional, erratic way. All they need is the willingness to do the work it takes to overcome those issues and find someone to teach them better ways to parent.

### **Medical Problems**

Physical illness alone does not cause family dysfunction. However, it can make life much harder for everyone concerned. Parents sometimes rely on their children to do things they would ordinarily do for themselves, causing them intense anxiety and sometimes depression. If one child is ill, the other children may feel neglected as you focus all your energy on helping that one child. You may not have had any control over the illness that puts such strain on your family, but you can control your actions, learn to use the resources available to you, and meet your children's needs. Medical problems present a tremendous challenge, but with the right help, you can keep your family functioning well.

### **Mental Illness**

Biology plays a major role in many mental illnesses, but the behavior problems that are usually a part of psychological problems make family life much more challenging. People with untreated mental illness can cause discord in a family that would otherwise be highly functional. With treatment, people with mental illness can be great parents. They can contribute positively to their families and children.

Source: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/pathways-between-child-maltreatment-and-adult-criminal-involvement>

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